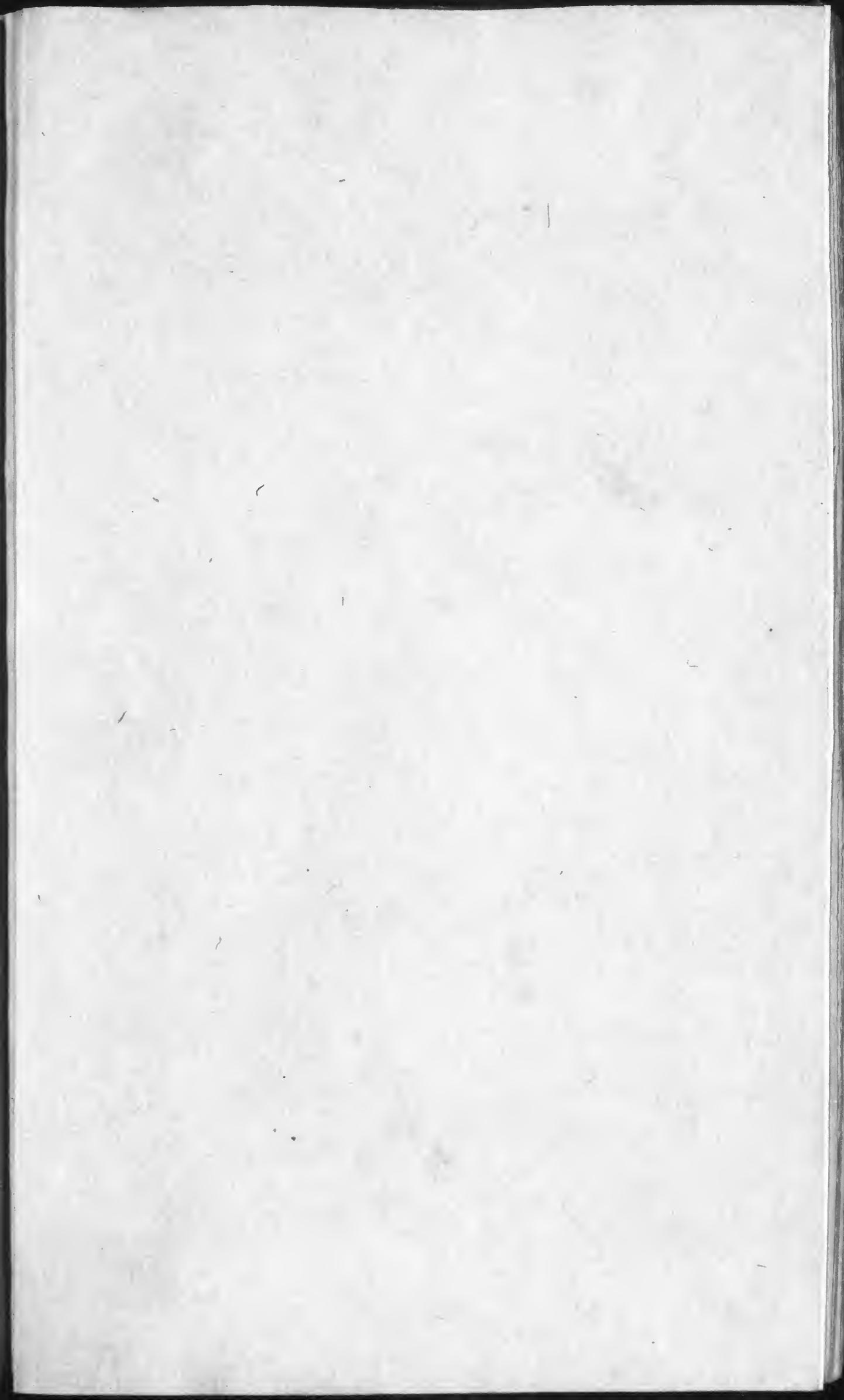
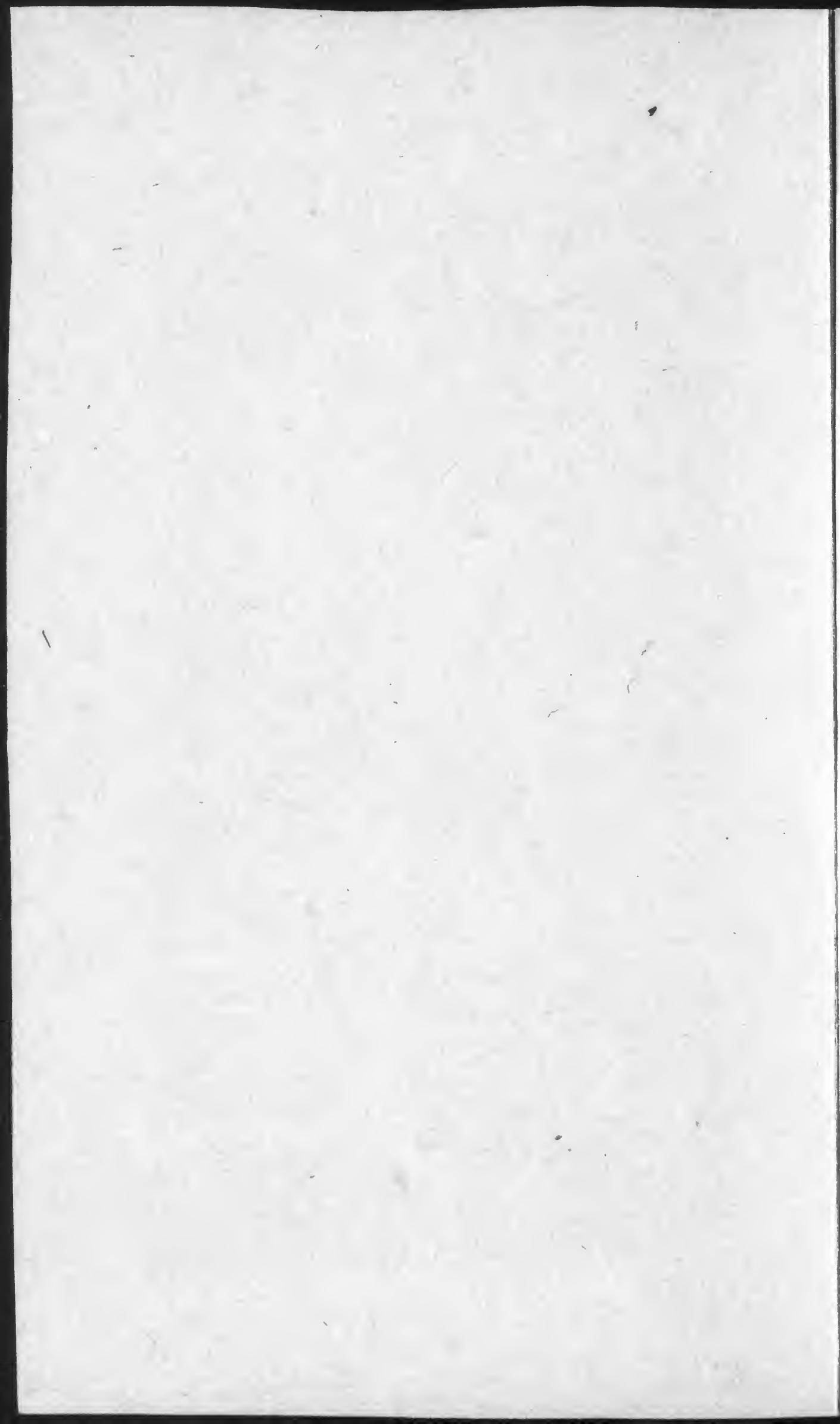


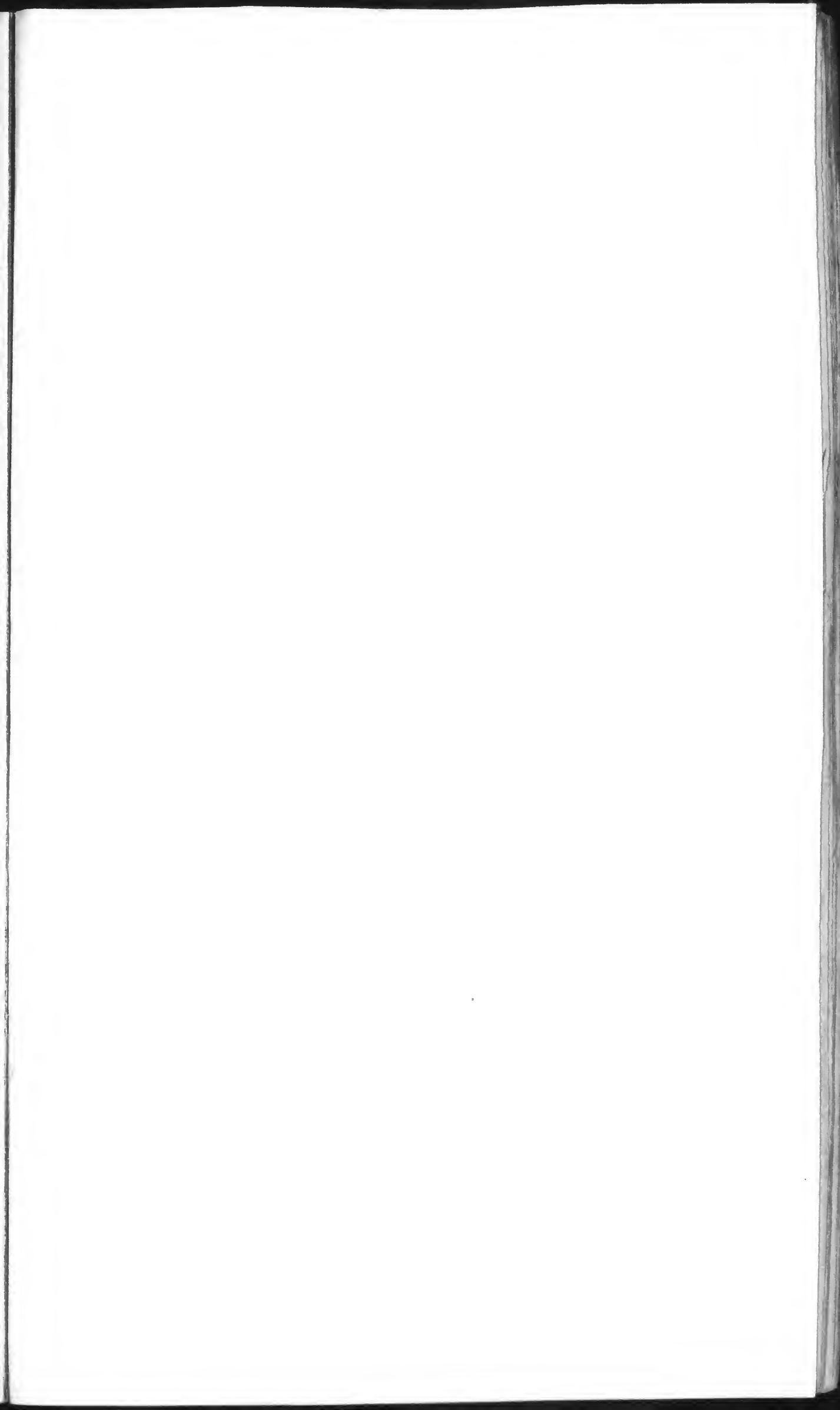
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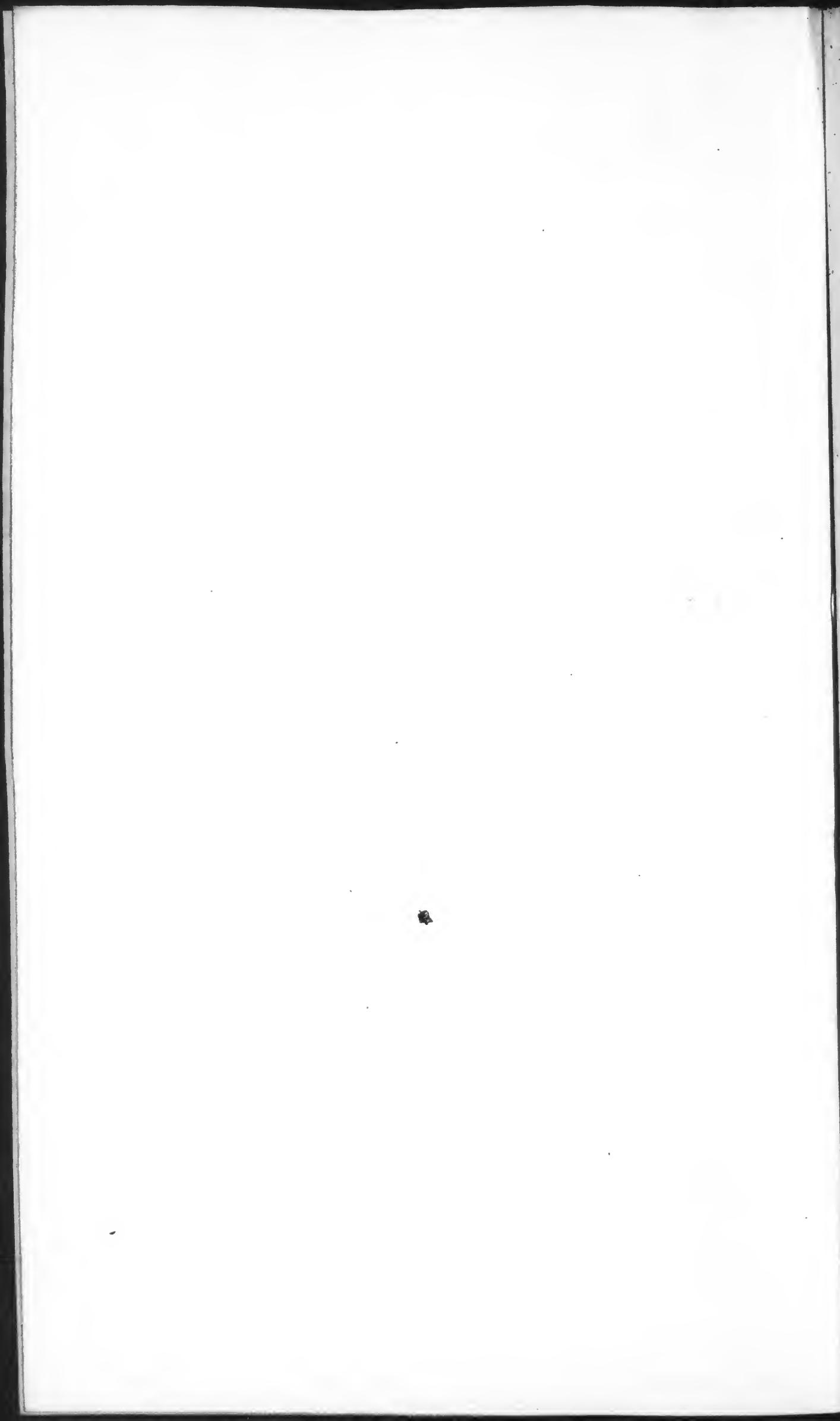
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THE GOOD SOLDIER. 9

OUTLINES

OF THE

LIFE, LABOURS, AND CHARACTER,

181
OF THE

REV. HUGH BEECH,

WESLEYAN MINISTER.

BY JOHN H. BEECH.

“ FERVENT IN SPIRIT; SERVING THE LORD; REJOICING
IN HOPE.”

“ My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.”

COWPER.

LONDON:

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P R E F A C E .

THE writer of this biography offers no apology for its publication. He is aware, that its subject was not distinguished by any remarkable intellectual powers, or any extraordinary general attainments—but he believes him to have been a man whose warm and cheerful piety, whose unwearied diligence, and whose considerable success in the ministry to which he devoted his life, deserved a record more permanent than a newspaper paragraph, and larger than the miniature likeness which will appear in the next Minutes of Conference. He is also mistaken, if some of the incidents he has inserted will not be regarded of some interest in themselves, and suggestive of important and useful lessons. And as this little volume affords another example of holy living, active labouring, cheerful suffering, and triumphant dying, he trusts it may prove helpful to some who are striving through “faith and patience to inherit the promises.”

He is conscious of many defects in the execution of his self-imposed task. He has written hastily, in moments snatched from numerous and inevitable public duties—and has been unduly liberal in comments

on the text of the narrative. But he has permitted the subject of the memoir to tell his own story as far as possible; being convinced, that of all modes of relating life and experiences, the autobiographical is the most interesting. He only regrets, that the manuscripts which have fallen into his hands, are not fuller and more consecutive. He doubts not, that he could have gleaned many additional interesting facts, had he made application to the numerous friends of his late father: but the work would then have swelled beyond the limits he had assigned it. That in the composition of these pages, he has always been guided by a sound judgment and a correct taste, he is, on a review of them, very much disposed to doubt. But that he has ever allowed an impulse of filial affection, to impart a warmer colour to the portrait he has attempted to paint, than fidelity would sanction, he unhesitatingly denies. To write this book has been to him, on the whole, a melancholy task; and he now commits it to the candour of his readers—"with all its imperfections on its head."

Stockport, July 14th, 1856.

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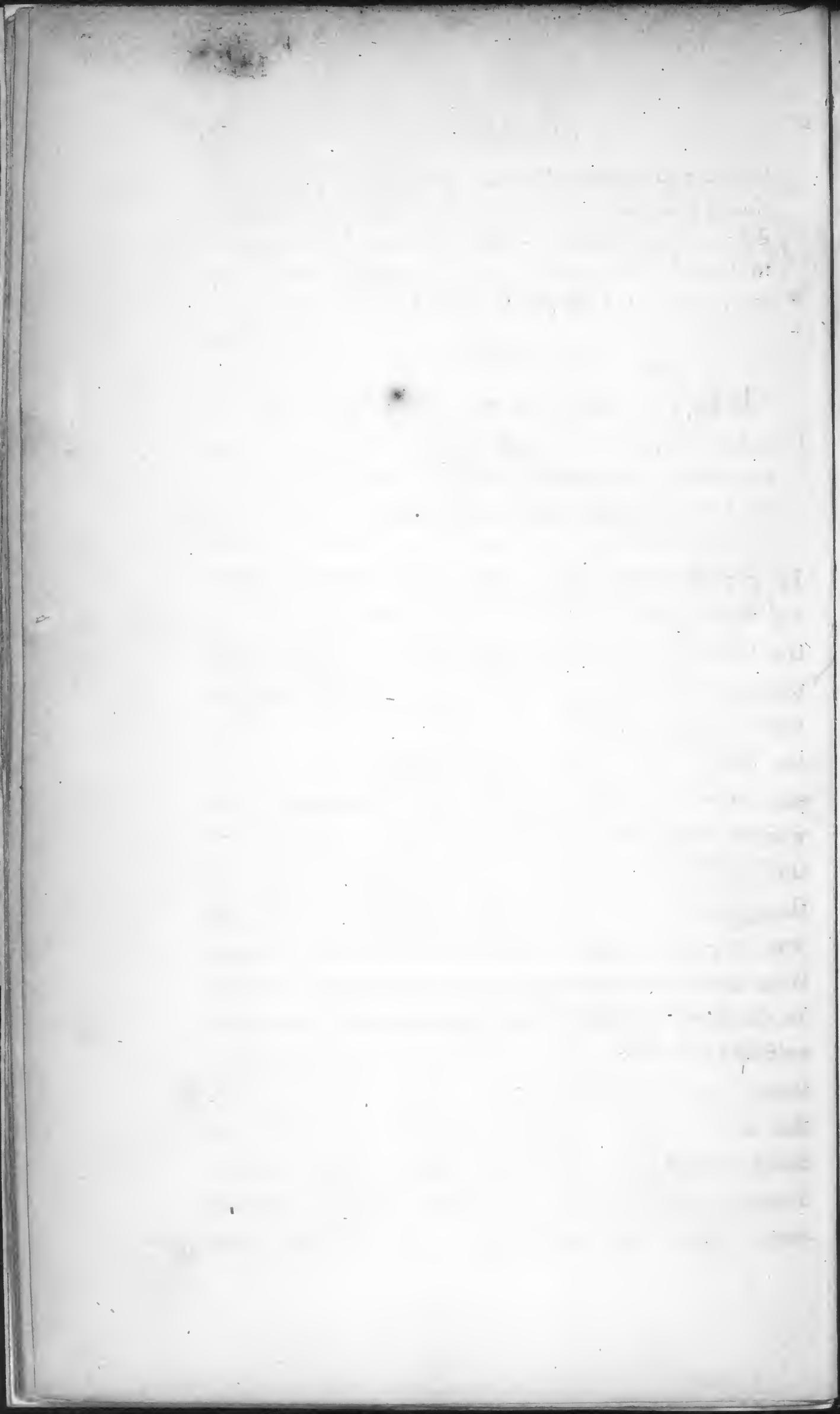
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M E M O I R
OF THE
REV. HUGH BEECH.

CHAPTER FIRST.

IN a secluded valley in the north of Staffordshire, not far from the long line of smoky towns known as the Potteries, there lies a little village, called Chesterton. Though many of its buildings are comparatively modern, there is a decided air of antiquity about the place. The truth is—that many centuries ago, soon after the commencement of the Christian era, it was an important Roman station. It then went by the name of Mediolanum; and was the point where the great Roman road, from the north of England, was intersected by one still more ancient, running from the eastern to the western shores of the island. In the fields around there are yet mounds and hollows evidently artificial, which certain antiquaries, accustomed to such hieroglyphics, have translated into the most complete remains of a Roman entrenched camp extant in Staffordshire—and within a short distance, ancient jugs and vases, filled with Roman coins, have been discovered. But whatever may

have been its former importance and population, it has dwindled into a quiet and insignificant village.

In this village, on the 3rd of June, 1787, Hugh Beech was born. His parents were in humble circumstances, though his father's family was not without traditions of former, and, indeed, comparatively recent, wealth and station. These traditions, supported by the evidence of sundry tombs, now falling to pieces with age, in the churchyard of Wolstanton, represented his ancestors as having been owners of considerable property in the immediate locality—and taught that this property had been partly dissipated by extravagance—partly alienated by fraud—and partly expended in the litigation that fraud had occasioned. Whether these traditions had any more substantial foundation than many similar ones in other families; or whether they were the mere attempts of fancy to fringe with gold the dull and leaden cloud of poverty overhanging his father's house, it matters not to enquire. It is sufficient to know, Hugh Beech paid no regard to them, and was, certainly, never either better or worse for all the alleged possessions of his forefathers.

Chesterton at that time could boast of only one place of worship,—a Methodist chapel, to which Hugh Beech was regularly sent in childhood.—That building still stands, and is said to be the oldest Wesleyan sanctuary in the north of Staffordshire. The beneficial influence of the religious services conducted there has been felt far and wide, for out

of the society connected with it there have arisen two Wesleyan ministers, of respectable standing and extensive usefulness—one of whom, the Rev. John Riles, died in 1826, after a ministry of thirty-eight years—and the other is the subject of this memoir. Sometime since, this chapel was supplemented by one belonging to the Primitive Methodists—and within the last two or three years, a Church in connection with the Establishment has been added, at a recent anniversary of which, some who officiated, ignored, perhaps inadvertently, the evangelic labours of those nonconformists who for three quarters of a century had endeavoured to promote the spiritual welfare of the villagers, and congratulated the inhabitants on the opening of an authorized gate of heaven: of course leaving it to be inferred, that all who may have arrived there out of this Nazareth, before the advent of this better dispensation, must have entered by the postern of the “uncovenanted mercies of God.”

The following is Hugh Beech's own account of his early life and conversion:—

“I can record little good respecting my childhood, for though I was very early the subject of the strivings of the Holy Spirit, yet having a strong constitution, a more than ordinary flow of animal spirits, a depraved heart, and little moral training at home, I was long disobedient to the heavenly calling. Indeed, I was exceedingly volatile and careless; and my mother being left a widow when I was about four years old, and having five children, of whom I was

the youngest, save one; very little attention was paid to the cultivation of my mind,—and about a year's schooling was all the instruction of that kind I ever received. This was then no matter of regret to me, for I loved play much better than books—but since I have seen abundant reason to regret it. Partly on account of my disregard to school, and partly because the smallness of my mother's resources rendered it desirable—I was sent to work in the Potteries when between seven and eight years of age—and well remember how proud I felt at earning my bread like a man. At that time I could read tolerably in the Bible, and had just begun to write. Unfortunately, my lot was cast with men extremely wicked. They treated me well enough in some respects—for I was an active and sprightly lad; and some of them who went and returned from Chesterton, often carried me on their backs, in the dark mornings and nights, over the bad and flooded parts of the road. But they were especially men of profane lips, and though, at first, I trembled at the horrid oaths they uttered, such was the force of example, that my heart was soon so hardened that I could not only listen to them with composure, but could join in them. I was not, however, easy in my wickedness—for I feared lest by some means my mother should hear of it. But as time passed on without that being the case, I grew in sin, and even endeavoured to excel other boys in profanity. One night, however, I betrayed myself. I was asleep in bed, when

my mother heard me uttering horrible blasphemies. Next morning she told me of it, and charged me with being in the habit of saying bad words. My conscience was alarmed—I was terrified at the idea of swearing and cursing when asleep ; for some time I was afraid of going to bed, lest when unconsciously sinning, I should drop into hell : and from that hour, I thank God, I abandoned that sin. But there was no real change in me—I loved other sins—the Bible I seldom looked into, and the Methodist Chapel was little better than a prison to me. Indeed, I was sometimes so alarmed by the sermons I heard, that I was anxious to hit upon some scheme to avoid going there. There was a difficulty in the case, for though my mother did not at that time attend often herself, she always expected us to repeat the texts. At length I contrived to accomplish my object. I lingered about the door of the Chapel during singing and prayer—and when the text was about to be read, I put my ear to the key hole—listened to the words—charged my memory with them, and then ran off to play : and at night could furnish what was thought sufficient evidence of my presence, by telling where and what the text had been. Such was the deceitfulness of my heart !

“In my childhood my life was often in danger through my recklessness and daring—and had not the watchful eye and the kind hand of my heavenly Father been over me, I should soon have finished my course. I will mention a few particulars :—

“I remember, when so young that I wore frocks, being once left alone in the house. I began to play with the fire, the flames caught my pinafore, and my clothes were instantly in a blaze. I made for the door, and had just opened it, when I met my mother carrying a large vessel full of water. She emptied it on me in a moment, and extinguished the flames—and with the exception of a few scorches, and the singeing of my hair, I was no worse.

“When, too, my father was in his last illness, and the doctor was one day visiting him, the neighbours were alarmed by the report of a gun at the door of our house. The truth was—the doctor was fond of field-sports, and intending to shoot after visiting his patients, had brought his fowling-piece with him; and on entering our house had imprudently left it, charged though it was, leaning against one of the door-posts. I pulled it down, got the muzzle across my lap—and by some accident touched the trigger. I was frightened and floored, but providentially was unhurt.

“At another time, I was sent to the shop for some article; and there being a keen frost, I ventured upon the ice of a deep pond—at the farther side of which a rivulet ran in, and rendered the ice near that place weak and rotten. It broke under me, and in I went; but I hung by my arms for some time—working my way through the snapping ice to where it was stronger—but I know not to this day how I got safely out.

“ Again, on one fifth of November, a number of boys, with myself, had procured an old iron cannon. We put an unreasonable charge of powder in it, and after that rammed it almost full of broken stones and old nails. I volunteered to fire it, as most of the lads were afraid to do that. They ran to a little distance, while I applied a lighted stick to the touch-hole. The cannon burst: a fragment frightfully disfigured one lad’s face, who happened to be a little nearer than the rest—while I escaped with only a slight wound on one ear.

“ One day, too, I and my companions were engaged in the dangerous amusement of throwing stones at each other. I saw a cart turned up at the side of the road: and after collecting a quantity of the ammunition required, was intending to shelter there, like an Indian in ambush; and in that fashion to carry on the war. Just when I was reaching it, a stone struck me on the forehead, making me insensible, and leaving a mark I shall carry to my grave.

“ But one of the most remarkable deliverances I experienced was as follows: One of my comrades being tired of his dog, determined to get rid of it. He mentioned his purpose to me; and we barbarously threw the poor animal down an old coal-pit. Some days after, on passing the place, I heard the dog howling. I was shocked at my own cruelty, and resolved to repair the suffering it had occasioned. With the help of some other boys I procured tackle from another pit, and fixed it over the mouth of this.

I was admonished of the danger of my undertaking—but regardless of everything, save the distress of the dog, I laid hold of the rope, and was let down for many fathoms. When about halfway on my descent, I caught on some old timber set to prop up the sides of the pit. The shock brought down heaps of earth, and some bricks; while the rope kept running down through my hands. I shouted to be drawn up—and when that was done, I swung off again—avoided the previous danger—reached the bottom—brought up the dog in my arms, and kept it till it died.

“I think, then, on a review of these providential deliverances, I have abundant reason to thank, love, and serve the God of my life.

“When about fifteen years old, I was seized with a dangerous illness. I thought I should have died, and have had to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This led me to examine myself, and I was fully convinced, that if I died as I was, I should be banished from the presence of the Lord, and become fuel for everlasting burning. The fear of hell, more than anything else, made me cry earnestly that the Lord would restore me: and I solemnly vowed that if he did so, I would serve him in future. In mercy he abated my disease, and I was soon well again. I remembered my vows, and sought for the best way to pay them. As soon as possible I went to the class which met at the house of Mr. Riles, (brother of our preacher of that name.) When the leader, Mr. Bathwell, spoke to me, I, with trembling,

expressed my desire to serve God. He exhorted me to break off my sinful ways, words, and companions, and to look to Christ. I thought in myself that I would never more be found among those who would not serve the Lord; and I selected, as my companion, the most serious lad in the village. One day, my fears of hell having somewhat subsided, I was playing at marbles with my brothers. A member of the class passing by, and observing me, reproved me very sharply for pursuing such a pastime—telling me he saw the way to heaven was much too narrow for me. Now, I have often thought, this reproof was injudiciously administered. It would have been right to have given me a word of warning; because, though my amusement was innocent enough, yet, as I was a seeker of salvation, my return to boyish sports was a symptom of a lack of earnestness in that which ought to have been my grand pursuit—but then this warning ought to have been given kindly, and it would have been better if given privately. A severe, imperious, and open rebuke, has often, no doubt, turned many of the weak and halt out of the way. At any rate, it produced that effect on me: my pride began to work—I felt indignant at the manner in which I had been spoken to;—I foolishly thought I could not again meet in class with that man—and I resolved to serve God and get to heaven without the aid of class-meetings. However, when I put my resolution into practice, my fears of hell gave way—the prayer-meetings and public means of grace became a burden to me;

and before long, I was found in the dancing-rooms, and other places of danger and amusement again. This was not all at once, it is true, but by gradual advances. For instance, I was passionately fond of singing and music, and I bought a flute, intending to practice only sacred music; but in a while I got to profane tunes—then I began to sing songs instead of hymns; and altogether was in a fair way to be ruined, both for time and eternity. But, oh! the riches of God's long-suffering—he followed me by his Spirit, and gave me no rest.

“About Christmas, 1805, I was much affected by the admonitions of an old mother in Israel. She said, ‘Ah! Hugh, my lad, how glad I was to see you, sometime ago, regularly attending chapel and class—but now, I fear, you are in the broad way to destruction.’ I could not refrain weeping in her presence, and she wept with me. She lent me some pious books; and by this, and similar little attentions, I was brought to think more seriously on the subject of religion.

“In February, 1806, I heard the Rev. George Morley, then stationed in the Newcastle-under-Lyme circuit, preach on these words:—‘But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.’ Never did any sermon so deeply impress me. In his application, Mr. M. said, ‘Some of you have made light of your afflictions—of your vows under them—of the sermons you have heard, and of the strivings of the

spirit of God.' I really thought Mr. Bathwell, or Mr. Riles, had been telling him all about me. I looked at him, and he looked at me. I hung down my head, and said to myself—'He means me.' I trembled; and wept, and prayed for mercy. The fear of hell was not as before, my greatest grief; but the consciousness of having sinned against so good a God, and after so many calls, broke my heart. That night I could not sleep. I began to seek the Lord in earnest. For three weeks my distress was almost insupportable. I frequented the company of the people of God—and often, after remaining with them till late at night, on returning home, I have shuddered lest I should be carried quick into the pit. Many a time, too, when praying alone, and in the dark, I dared not open my eyes, lest Satan should be before me. I obtained a book called, 'The Practice of Piety,' and read it to a sick person, thinking that might make me more comfortable. It, however, increased my light; and seeing myself as the vilest of the vile; I began to despair of finding mercy. The last day I was in bondage my feelings were horrible. I asked some good men to meet together, and pray with and for me. Two of them came and prayed by turns. The heavens seemed as brass—my heart grew harder; and I thought mine was a lost case. In order to encourage me, they told me of several who had recently found the Lord. My distress became greater, but at length I was led to say—'My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy word.' I

persevered in prayer, till suddenly I had a view of Christ on the cross, holding out a pardon, bought by blood, for me, even me. I thought—‘Now lost or saved, I will rely on him who died for the world and me.’ I trusted in Christ, and these words were applied to my mind, ‘I will give thee rest.’ I experienced such a sense of the presence and love of God that I said—‘If there were ten thousand fiends in my way to heaven, in the name of Jesus I would rush through them all.’ Blessed be God, ‘old things had passed away, all things had become new.’ ”

The above is the account given by Hugh Beech of his conversion. It bears all the marks of a genuine work of grace. There is nothing doubtful and indistinct about it—but it has all the definition of a divine change. It was on this conversion that Hugh Beech’s Christian character and usefulness were built. He came into the way to heaven by the right gate—repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and his path was afterwards that of the just, “as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” How much such a deep, clear, blessed change is to be preferred either to those professed conversions, whose fruit is neither to be felt in the heart, nor read in the life—or to those which only touch the surface of the soul, and leave all its depths unvisited and unrenewed !

CHAPTER SECOND.

Hugh Beech having tasted that the Lord is gracious—became, according to the instinct of every regenerated heart, anxious to do something for his Great Master. Like David, though without any thought of ever being in the ministry, he began to teach transgressors God's way. Burning love to Christ, and to the souls of his fellow-men, filled his heart. In the sanguine simplicity of Christian childhood, he imagined that none could resist his testimony for the Redeemer—and he flattered himself with the idea that he should be the instrument of bringing multitudes of his neighbours to the knowledge of salvation. With this object he went from house to house, telling what God had done for his soul. He gratefully records that a few received his testimony, and began to seek the pearl of great price—but in reference to the great majority, he had reason to adopt the complaint of the prophet—“Lord, who hath believed our report?” He was diligent in his attendance on the means of grace, and began to take part in conducting prayer-meetings. Sunday schools were then a comparatively recent institution; and were almost confined to places possessing a considerable population. But he looked with pity on the children growing up around him—habitually desecrating the holy Sabbath, and untaught in the things

making for their eternal peace. He probably remembered, too, his own almost untutored childhood—the dangers to which his ignorance had exposed him, and the sins into which it had contributed to betray him—and to save some of them from similar hazards,—in conjunction with two or three others like minded,—he rented an empty cottage, and established the first Sabbath School in Chesterton. The efforts of these pious youths may now be either forgotten or undervalued by those who are connected with the schools happily just erected there, but they are doubtless written in the eternal brass of God's book. These self-appointed, but in some sense, heaven-inspired teachers, could communicate to their pupils, collected out of the highways and hedges, but little secular knowledge: only the mere alphabet of human learning—but they taught them truths able to make them wise unto salvation. Nor did Hugh Beech labour in this vocation in vain. We well remember some three years since, hearing a middle-aged man express himself in a class-meeting thus—"More than forty years ago, Hugh Beech was my teacher in the Sunday School at Chesterton. He was then a very young man, with long flowing locks—very lively in prayer, and a capital singer. His prayers and instructions were partly instrumental in bringing me afterwards to serve God." Possibly some others at the resurrection of the just, may call him blessed for these benevolent labours.

About this time, he began to give all the attention his opportunities would allow, to the improvement of

his mind, particularly in theological knowledge. He procured Wesley's and Fletcher's works, and read them carefully. His profiting soon appeared in the increased coherence and power of his public prayers. His zeal for God—his love for man, and the repeated promptings of his Christian friends, induced him occasionally to give an exhortation in the devotional meetings he attended; and these early efforts were generally acceptable. It was about this time, too, he escaped no small peril of a check, both to his intellectual advancement and to his spiritual progress. He was always peculiarly sensitive to the fascinations of music. The love of song was innate, and in very early life was strongly developed. He possessed a voice remarkably rich, sweet, flexible, and powerful—a voice which retained most of its quality to the last—and which in his maturity, combined with a correct ear, and an extensive knowledge of Wesleyan psalmody, secured him the appointment of precentor to the Conference for a number of successive years. But not further to anticipate—soon after his conversion, he wished to improve the devotional music in the chapel at Chesterton. To accomplish this, as well as to gratify his natural taste, he determined to buy a violoncello, and to perform on it there. He had set his heart on one he had seen in Mr. Tregortha's shop, at Burslem. When telling this story, he was accustomed to say, “I saved my money for some months, for those instruments were more expensive than they are now. When I had enough,

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About this time, he began to give all the attention his opportunities would allow, to the improvement of

his mind, particularly in theological knowledge. He procured Wesley's and Fletcher's works, and read them carefully. His profiting soon appeared in the increased coherence and power of his public prayers. His zeal for God—his love for man, and the repeated promptings of his Christian friends, induced him occasionally to give an exhortation in the devotional meetings he attended ; and these early efforts were generally acceptable. It was about this time, too, he escaped no small peril of a check, both to his intellectual advancement and to his spiritual progress. He was always peculiarly sensitive to the fascinations of music. The love of song was innate, and in very early life was strongly developed. He possessed a voice remarkably rich, sweet, flexible, and powerful—a voice which retained most of its quality to the last—and which in his maturity, combined with a correct ear, and an extensive knowledge of Wesleyan psalmody, secured him the appointment of precentor to the Conference for a number of successive years. But not further to anticipate—soon after his conversion, he wished to improve the devotional music in the chapel at Chesterton. To accomplish this, as well as to gratify his natural taste, he determined to buy a violoncello, and to perform on it there. He had set his heart on one he had seen in Mr. Tregortha's shop, at Burslem. When telling this story, he was accustomed to say, “ I saved my money for some months, for those instruments were more expensive than they are now. When I had enough,

one Saturday afternoon I went to Tregortha's, and asked to look at the fiddle. I held it in my hands, and was about to pay the price—when I said to myself, 'If I buy this, I shall be ruined. I shall be fiddling when I ought to be praying—I shall read very little—it will become my God !' I put it down—told the shopman I would pause before I concluded to purchase it—and went home with the feeling a man has at some great deliverance." He would add, "I believe I did right,— I never could have fiddled by halves ; and had I taken it with me that day, I think I should never have been a Methodist preacher." Sometimes he would append to this another circumstance, in something like these words—" I was once in danger, when a boy, of going completely wrong, partly from passion, and partly from a love of music. It was war time, and there were soldiers lying at Newcastle. I often went to hear the band, and was quite taken with the instruments, and with the swords and fine coats of the boy-drummers and fifers. One day my mother refused me some money I wanted, and as I then earned a good deal for a lad, I was so grievously offended that I said, ' Well, I'll go for a soldier.' She replied, ' They won't have thee, thou'rt too little.' I retorted—' I know they'll be glad of me for the band,'—and off I set to Newcastle to enlist. My passion cooled on the road—I began to think of my home and friends ; I went slower and slower, till at length I came to a full stop, and climbed on a gate to finish my meditations. Meantime, my

mother, poor woman! supposing I was gone for good, followed me. As I sat on the gate, I heard a step, and looking up, saw her coming along the road. At the same moment she caught a glimpse of me; and saying, 'Oh, I see he'll not go to day;' turned round on her heel and walked home. She knew me well enough, for some hours after I went back, rather crest fallen."

But to resume our narrative. Eighteen months after Hugh Beech became a member of the Wesleyan society, he was appointed a leader, and commissioned to raise a new class. This fact demonstrates the estimation in which he was held by those over him in the Lord. He began with three members, but soon they were increased to twenty. It may, indeed, admit of discussion, whether, considering the vast importance of the kind of men employed as leaders, to the spiritual, financial, and numerical prosperity of Methodism—it is prudent to commit such a trust to juvenile hands. No doubt much may be said on both sides. On the one hand, it is apparent that age, stability, an experience of the deep things of God, and a tolerably extensive acquaintance with the human heart, are desirable qualifications for this office—but they cannot all be combined in youthful Christians. On the other hand, with age there often comes the abatement of physical energy—of mental ardour and activity—and of those plodding, semi-pastoral habits essential to the efficient discharge of the duties of this function. Perhaps, therefore, the best method is, to

have in all societies of considerable number, leaders both old and young. The zeal of youth, working together with the wisdom of age, will ensure a higher type of success in any particular body-Methodistic, than would either working separately. The great practical difficulty, however, with which Wesleyan ministers have often to contend, is the paucity of really competent persons—a paucity sometimes compelling the appointment of individuals to office—who in a more favourable condition of the church, would have remained in the obscurity of the rank and file.

Another observation suggested by the rapid increase in Hugh Beech's class is, that the numerical augmentation of Methodism is, perhaps, almost as dependant on its leaders as on its ministers. Its Itinerancy, Connexionism, and Missions, involve such frequent and heavy demands on a minister's time and labour, as to render it next to impossible for him to cultivate that acquaintance with the individuals of his congregations, which on many accounts is so important. Leaders are intended partly to supply this necessary lack of service. In most cases, they might without any great difficulty, know the regular members of the respective congregations to which they belong. They should never permit strangers to attend public worship, more than a few times, without seeking further acquaintance with them. They should watch the effect of the preaching of the word, and where they see persons whose countenances indicate serious attention, or gracious em-

tion, they should strive to find an opportunity of saying to them, “Come with us, and we will do you good.” How much excellence, which otherwise would have been as the morning cloud, has in this way been condensed, and has afterwards descended on some field of society, refreshing and animating, as the “rain upon the mown grass,” or as “showers that water the earth !” Hugh Beech’s class increased by efforts of this kind—and were they more frequent, the Lord God of our fathers would make us many more than we are !

After he had for some time given exhortations, he was urged by the ministers and some of the friends on the circuit, to attempt to preach. To this, however, he did not readily consent. He had a high estimate of the mental qualifications needful to preach the gospel, and of the responsibility that office involved—and believing himself destitute of those qualifications, he naturally shrank from incurring that responsibility. Nor, probably, was this delay in attempting to discourse on a particular text, nor this perseverance in exhortative exercises, at all inimical to his future character as a preacher. There is a danger of aspirants to the sacred office, especially when gifted, endeavouring to make their *début* as stars of the first magnitude. Their opening public essay has all the technical regularity of a sermon before the Conference. It is rich in an exordium—three general divisions, and a peroration. It is like a pleasure-boat, built after the model of a ninety gun

frigate. The truth is, it is all cut, dried, and committed to memory, down to its minutest syllable. The consequence often is, that such preachers, in after life, destitute of any extemporaneous power, are characterized, possibly, by accuracy, but certainly by the coldness and stiffness of death. There is no ease, warmth, or nature about them. They draw in harness, fastened to the car of their ponderous preparations—and they go straight on, fearful of a false step, or a rut, or even a straw in the road, lest some of their chains or straps should break, and their progress should suddenly and disgracefully cease. Now had they taken St. Paul's advice to Timothy, and given themselves to exhortation, the case would have been different with them. They would gradually have acquired mastery over both ideas and expression—and they would have become able, when in the pulpit, to think of something beside the lines of their manuscripts, and to feel some more elevating and hallowing emotion, than an unspeakable horror of coming to a dead stand. They might not always have spoken with equal precision—but they would often have spoken with incomparably greater power. Their sermons might not always so much have resembled a garden laid out in the Dutch style—with trim hedges, straight walks, rectangular beds, and trees and flowers growing as if by geometry—but they would more have resembled the world as God made it—sometimes stretching, it may be, into barren wastes—but sometimes, too, sinking into rich

valleys, and sometimes starting into mountains, grand and impressive. They would not so much have reminded us in their finest forms of Promethean statues—beautiful and lifeless—but they would rather have imaged to us Adam, rising from the earth when the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Instead of their eloquence being as the mechanical utterances of an automaton—it would have been the sublime blaze of an intellect and a soul on fire. Hugh Beech, for some time, avoided texts and adhered to exhortation ; and his future ministerial character was, probably, thereby rather helped than hindered.

At length, however, he became impressed with the conviction that a woe would befall him if he preached not the gospel. About this time, he was, without any previous direct intimation, put on the circuit plan as a local preacher on trial—and his first appointment was to a place about two miles from his native village. He now deemed himself bound to take a text—and he selected, as the foundation of his first attempt at a sermon, Hosea x. 12, “It is time to seek the Lord.” On the same day he again addressed the same congregation, and he records that the Lord opened his mouth, and some of his hearers found it a time of refreshing from His presence. From that day he grew bolder, and frequently preached in the open air, in the most neglected and godless parts of the neighbouring country. He soon attracted attention, and had

fruit of his labour. There is a place near Chesterton called Roggin Row—the inhabitants of which were then notorious for card-playing, cock-fighting, and almost every species of wickedness. To this place he often went, in company with two or three friends, after his daily labour—and beginning to sing, a congregation would gather round them—when, mounting a chair, he would earnestly beseech them to be reconciled to God. He met with some opposition, in the shape of jeers,—and suffered some persecution in the shape of rotten eggs—and occasionally more dangerous missiles—but he persevered undauntedly. One evening, a number of men, ringleaders in sin, were standing idly together, when they heard him commencing a service by singing a hymn. One of them said, “Let us go and hear Hugh preach.” As they listened, conviction seized several; and when the service was ended, they separated silently and went home. Next morning two of them met, when one exclaimed—“What dost think I did last neet? Whau, mon, I threw me cards intu’t fire, and they brunt so blew.” The other answered, “I went home and twisted my feighting-cocks necks round.” These men sought the Lord—became witnesses that Christ has power to forgive sins, and were useful and honourable members of the Wesleyan society. Other fruits of his juvenile evangelistic efforts has long been gathered into the heavenly garner—while some remains hanging and ripening unto this day.

His piety, zeal, usefulness, and acceptable gifts,

led the ministers and officers of the circuit in which he resided to conclude he was designed, by the great Head of the Church, to be set apart to the work of the Christian ministry. He was, therefore, after the usual examinations, recommended by the quarterly and district meetings to the Wesleyan Conference of 1810—and by that Conference was accepted, and appointed as a probationer to the Horncastle circuit.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Mr. Beech commenced his itinerant ministerial career with much fear and trembling—but with an ardent love to Christ and the souls of his fellow-men—and with a single eye to the glory of God. It has not been unusual with the opponents and depreciators of Wesleyan ministers, to represent them as having been selected, like Jeroboam's priests, from the lowest of the people; and as having sought their office either for a morsel of bread, or for the opportunity it afforded of suddenly emerging from a mean and obscure condition, to ease, honour, affluence, and power. No representation can, generally speaking, be more unfair. Wesleyan ministers do not usually come from a humbler rank in life than did the Apostles and Evangelists of the Saviour. Though among them not many noble, not many mighty are called—yet neither can they properly be said to be gathered from

the offscouring of society. They have some among them who originally belonged to the same profession as Luke the physician—others who have come from the service of government, as Matthew from the receipt of custom—others who, like Saul of Tarsus, have studied the law at the feet of modern Gamaliels—and who, like him, have enjoyed all the educational advantages the times have afforded—besides a multitude whose former occupations would not suffer by comparison with the pastoral, piscatory, or other pursuits of the primitive Apostles. Perhaps, in no instance do they come into the office for bread—for they have been accustomed in all cases to eat bread honourably obtained—generally the bread of honest industry—not the less sweet for being often earned by horny hands. As for ease, wealth, and power—the unconverted man who can be satisfied with the modicum of them Methodism confers on its ministers, cannot be one of those children of this world who are wiser in their generation than the children of light—but he must possess either an understanding of very dubious clearness, or a heart of, in some respects, extremely attenuated carnality. It is not needful to affirm that no Wesleyan ministers ever became covetous, like Judas; or treacherous, like Peter; but it may be sufficient to say, that most of them begin their course with pure love to God and man, and with an eye fixed on the recompence of the reward.

Certainly, Hugh Beech took not on him the sacred

office for bread. He was then a skilful and rapid workman—engaged constantly in the more profitable departments of his art, and probably earning as much as he ever afterwards received, and considerably more than Methodism in many circuits gave him. It is useless to speculate on the position he might have occupied in the world, had he not entered the Christian ministry—for probabilities are not always answered in fact—nor are riches always to men of understanding. When he received notice of his appointment to Horncastle, his employers, (who were gentlemen entirely unconnected with Methodism, and who, according to the custom of the trade, might have retained his services for some months longer) at once released him—expressed regret at his departure, and good wishes for his future course—and assured him, that if the Methodist ministry did not meet his expectations, a situation in their manufactory should be open to him. This was creditable to both parties.

He now prepared to depart for the, to him, unknown country of Lincolnshire. There was at that time a coach passing through Leek every evening to Derby and London—and another from the former place every morning to Lincoln—and he was advised to travel by these conveyances. Accordingly, having sent his boxes by another route, one afternoon in August he set out to walk about twelve miles to Leek, accompanied by some young friends, and carrying a parcel containing a few books and clothes. When they came to the top of a hill near Leek, they knelt

in the high road—prayed for one another—wept—shook hands, and parted. It was then about five in the afternoon—and Mr. Beech, finding the coach would not arrive till eight, sauntered in the streets to while away the time. He must have been somewhat clerical in his appearance, for as he passed a particular shop, a little old man came out, and accosted him with,—“Pray, Sir, are not you one of our preachers?” He replied, “I am on my way to a circuit, Sir.” “That’s right,” said the old man; “Come in, and have some tea; you shall preach for us to night.” Mr. B. objected, that the coach left at eight. “Oh,” said his extemporaneous host, “you’ll have time enough for a short sermon; I shall send the crier round to announce the service.” The notice was given—a congregation assembled—Mr. B. preached, and just contrived to catch the coach. He rode along, depressed by recollections of home, and by a conviction of his insufficiency for the work in which he was about to engage. When he reached Derby, it being assize time, he was unable to procure a bed at the inn. He saw the coach depart for London—sat down a few minutes, and then suddenly remembered he had left his parcel on the roof of the vanished vehicle. He rushed out—found the ostler, and offered him half a guinea, to take a horse and recover his property. The man smiled, and replied that the coach was too far off to be overtaken. He then went into the coach office, and acquainted the clerk with his loss. That functionary gave him the cold com-

fort of an assurance, that he would never see his parcel again—"the coachman," said he, "will take care of that; it will be a little pocket money for him." Mr. B. stood at the door of the office ruminating. "Well," thought he, "I had better go home again; it is clear the Lord never intended me for a travelling preacher; he is stopping me at the outset." At that moment a gentleman came up and said, "Is anything the matter, Sir?" The case was stated to him. "Oh," said he, "don't distress yourself; be kind enough to give me your address, and as I am one of the coach-proprietors, I will take care your parcel shall be returned." Encouraged by these words, Mr. B., next morning, went on his journey; and it may be observed, that the promise of the obliging coach-proprietor was in a few days fulfilled.

From Lincoln he found his way to a village in the Horncastle circuit, where his superintendent, the late Rev. Edward Towler, was that day appointed. On his first interview with Mr. T., he presented him with a letter from the superintendent of his native circuit—and sat down with the desolate feeling of a stranger in a strange land. Mr. T. read the letter, rose, crossed the room, grasped both hands of his young colleague, and with tears in his eyes exclaimed, "My dear lad, I will be as a father to thee." From that moment the heart of the young man clave to his superintendent—and he reverenced and served him as a son in the gospel.

The Horncastle circuit was then very extensive, and much time was expended in travelling from place to place. The desire of the hospitable friends who entertained the preachers to be as much as possible in their company, during their occasional visits, was a source of some inconvenience and disadvantage to Mr. B.; as it seriously curtailed his opportunities of reading and study. The deficiencies of his early education also became painfully apparent to him, and sorely discouraged him. Those were not the happy days when candidates for the Wesleyan ministry were carefully instructed in classics and theology, by men of distinguished attainments in both. The education many of them had, was obtained by themselves—without the aid of masters and professors. Diligent study afforded the only means by which they could remedy the lack of early training. The subject of our memoir was convinced of this; and procuring a tinderbox, lamp, and great coat, rose even in the winter at three o'clock in the morning, and pursued his studies till daylight. He adhered to the practice of early rising till within a year of his death. All this time he was devout, energetic, and laborious. He found favour in the eyes of the people—God gave him seals to his ministry—and yet he was often strongly tempted to abandon his charge, and return to his former employment. When he had been about four months in the circuit, he believed he had exhausted his scanty theological knowledge, and could never again appear before the con-

gregation at Horncastle. One morning he was actually packing up his books when Mr. Towler entered his room and said, "What does this mean?" He replied, "I can preach no more, and so I am going home." Mr. T. reasoned with him in the most paternal manner—told him of his acceptance in the circuit, and of some instances of his usefulness in the conversion of sinners, and of his (Mr. T.'s) assurance that he was called of God to the work of the ministry; but for a while all was in vain. At length he said, "Well, promise me to try one more Sabbath." Mr. B. consented, after much persuasion, and on that Sabbath, though slenderly prepared, he preached with more liberty and power than he had ever experienced, and some good was done. On that Sabbath, too, he obtained so firm a conviction of his divine call to preach the gospel, that it was never after seriously shaken. So did the Saviour condescend to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees of his servant. Nothing in the way of remarkable revival occurred in connection with his labours during that year—but after a lapse of nearly half a century, he is still remembered by persons advanced in life, in that part of Lincolnshire, for his piety, zeal, and excellent singing.

The late Daniel O'Connell, of agitating memory, once ridiculed Methodist preachers, by representing them as sometimes travelling without money; and when coming in sight of a toll-gate, straightway having recourse to prayer—fanatically expecting to have

the coin necessary to frank their passage, conveyed by some spiritual legerdemain into their pockets. Though this was but a gross and impudent caricature, yet many a good man has been assisted in comparatively trivial difficulties in a singular manner. Mr. Beech was naturally a generous man, and never particularly discriminating as to the objects of his charity. The money he had brought with him from Staffordshire speedily vanished. Towards the close of his second quarter in the circuit—being about to take a country round of a fortnight's duration—he examined the state of his exchequer, and found his funds reduced to a very inconsiderable sum. He calculated it would suffice for toll-bars till quarter-day—but he feared he should be bankrupt if his horse's shoes came off on the journey. However he went on his way, and preached that evening at a place called Ketsby. As he was going to his lodgings, an old man, who bore the reputation of a miser, overtook him, and said, “ You have preached a very good sermon to-night—here's a parcel for you,”—giving him something wrapped in a paper. On being opened it contained half a crown in copper.

A few nights after, in another village, he was praying with the family where he was entertained. It consisted of an aged mother and two sons. During prayer, the old lady seized his hand, and shut the fingers over something she deposited in the palm. When the devotions were ended, she bade them “ Good night,” and retired. He then told the sons

what had occurred, and offered to give them whatever might be in his hand. They laughed—said their mother had odd ways—but was quite competent to manage her own affairs—and they should not meddle in the matter. He found in his palm a piece of gold. These facts will perhaps be regarded as of some interest, whether considered as belonging to the chapter of curious coincidences, or whether placed in some higher category. Every reader will draw his own inferences—but none can severely blame Mr. B. if he gathered from these events increased confidence in the minute care of his heavenly Father over him—for even supposing such a result unwarranted, as we do not—still, it was only an example of the use of the Christian's philosopher's stone—turning baser metal into gold.

At the Conference of 1811, he, and both his colleagues, were transferred from Horncastle to Epworth. He spent the year in endeavouring to do good—and in persevering efforts to improve his theological and general knowledge—and in both pursuits he was not without success. His piety was deepened, and his mind enlarged—and his character was gradually forming into the zealous, active, hearty, and happy Methodist preacher he afterwards became. It was about this time, too, that he began to amuse himself by writing in rhyme. To call his compositions of this sort poetry, would perhaps be to give them too dignified a title—though certainly some of them would not suffer by comparison with much of the metrical

rhapsody which in these days goes by that name. He, however, never claimed to be a poet, though he was able to appreciate the beauties of poetry—his ambition never went farther in this direction than to please himself, and occasionally to amuse and benefit some of his friends, by conveying a few thoughts in lines possessing a given number of feet—and marked by their jingling terminations.

From Epworth he was removed, in 1812, to Bakewell. He left his Lincolnshire friends with reluctance, and came to his new circuit under the impression that the land of Goshen was behind him, and the wilderness before him. He certainly found Methodism in the circuit comparatively low—no horse was kept—the walks were long, and the regular ministerial duty exceedingly laborious. However, the physical aspect of the country delighted him—he appreciated the mingled magnificence and loveliness of the scenery of that part of Derbyshire; and as he was strong and healthy, full of divine love and zeal—the prospect of labour rather cheered than daunted him. He devoted himself to his proper work of spreading scriptural holiness, both by preaching the gospel, and visiting from house to house—refusing to be satisfied with the performance of his stated course of ministerial toil—but often overstepping it by taking his stand beneath some tree, or on some horse-block in the different villages, and crying to their inhabitants, “Behold your God!” Nor did he spend his strength for nought; some were brought to

seek the Saviour by his instrumentality—though his success by no means corresponded to the extent of his labours, nor equalled that with which the Head of the Church favoured him in some other localities. He, however, met with general acceptance, and was appointed a second year to the same sphere of holy toil. It was during this year he obtained his greatest earthly blessing ; and in securing that blessing committed his only offence against the discipline which, as a Wesleyan minister, he was bound to observe. In the village of Ashford, near Bakewell, he was entertained during his visits at the house of a widow lady of the name of Smith—whose daughter at once became an object of interest and attraction to him. Miss Smith was young, of pleasing appearance—of gentle manners—of superior mental endowments—well educated—possessing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit—and above all, she was deeply pious. Mr. B. was irresistibly attracted towards her at first sight—but fearing to yield to a mere impulse of passion, he delayed confessing his love, till by observation and enquiry he was assured she would be a help meet for him. By one of those ingenious devices, not unusual among persons similarly affected, he contrived one afternoon to place himself without suspicion, where he could hear her meeting her class, (for she was already a leader)—and he was satisfied she was in that department of usefulness, as in everything else, eminently qualified to be the wife of a Wesleyan minister. His attentions were favourably

received—the attachment became mutual, and on the 25th of November, 1813, they were married—and she comforted him in sorrow—counselled him in difficulty—secured his domestic happiness—promoted his respectability as a man, his piety as a Christian, and his efficiency as a minister; in short, did him good and not evil all the days of her life.

It is, however, to be regretted, that the time at which he drew this prize in the matrimonial lottery, was not precisely the right one. He had not quite completed the term of his probation—and, therefore, was guilty of a violation of one part of the discipline to which his submission was due. This violation cannot be justified—seeing that, had he possessed his soul in patience a few months longer, nothing was likely to have defeated the accomplishment of his wishes—but it may admit of extenuation. He was uncomfortable in his lodgings—and there was not that perfect accordance between himself and some with whom he was officially connected, which is always desirable. Like most men of sanguine temperament, he was exceedingly sensitive. Open as the day, generous as the sun, and guileless as an Israelite indeed, confidence and affection always awakened in him a suitable response—while a shadow of suspicion grieved and harrassed him. He experienced the need of the comforts, as well as of the soothing influences of a domestic hearth—and he determined to obtain them as speedily as possible. He felt himself in a sort of purgatory—he saw a paradise before him,

fenced in only by the hedge of a prudential ecclesiastical regulation ; and so he stepped over the hedge—and took possession of the garden. His enjoyment, however, was a little diminished, by discovering that the fence he had crossed was a hedge of thorns ; and that he was to be punished for his temerity. In plain English—the ensuing Conference mulcted him of a year of his ministry, and consequently delayed his ordination till he had travelled five, instead of four, years. This he doubtless felt to be a calamity—but he acquiesced in its propriety—and while never regretting, for a moment, the fact of his marriage, acknowledged that he had done a right thing at not exactly the right time. It is gratifying to add, that his spirit was not soured by the forfeiture he had incurred—nor his love for his brethren diminished—nor his respect for the discipline of the body to which he belonged abated—but that very respect led him to shrink from any allusion to his ecclesiastical delinquency. In after years, when he was advised that by merely asking the Conference, he might, probably, have had his ministry dated from 1810 instead of 1811, he refused to moot the question—on the ground that such an act of favour towards him might possibly become, some day, an inconvenient and mischievous precedent—thus evincing a higher regard for the order and welfare of the body, than for his individual interest and honour.

We may appropriately conclude this chapter by remarking, that no Christian church can escape disso-

lution without discipline—and that in such a voluntary association of churches as that which goes by the name of Wesleyan Methodism, discipline must comprehend questions of finance as well as questions of morality. No doubt the regulation which prohibits the marriage of ministers on trial, owes its existence, in some degree, to financial considerations—but not entirely so. It should be remembered that ministers *on probation* are liable to be dismissed, and will be so dismissed, should not their probation be satisfactorily borne. It cannot therefore be proper, apart from financial considerations, to sanction men in contracting indissoluble engagements, while in a sort of chrysalis state, on the presumption that they will be Wesleyan ministers; when very possibly they may turn out something as different as worms from butterflies. A host of inconveniences and evils, affecting both individuals and families, may arise from acting on such a presumption. There can be nothing wrong in prohibiting such action by pain and penalty. Of course, the authority which enacted this law may relax its operation in particular cases, and for special reasons; but no individual under its jurisdiction is warranted to take the law in his own hands. As to all the rhetorical thunder and lightning this regulation has brought down upon the Conference—suggesting a comparison with Popery in “forbidding to marry;” it is a deplorable waste of indignation and eloquence—as the effect of the regulation is, first, to prevent men from marrying, presuming on a position

they may never hold; and secondly, to assist in securing those who may marry, after attaining that position, some provision for the support of a household.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

At the Conference of 1814, Mr. Beech was appointed to labour in the Belper circuit. His colleague was the late Rev. Richard Pattison, a man of singular devotedness to his Master and his work. This association was peculiarly happy—for they were men of kindred spirit, and cordially united in endeavouring to promote the welfare of their charge. They found the circuit in a low condition—but soon symptoms of improvement appeared. Some extracts from a diary kept by Mr. B. for a few weeks, will show the spirit of piety and zeal in which he commenced his labours in this new sphere.

“ Wednesday, August 24th. The Lord Jehovah be my helper! This day I entered on the Belper circuit—found at Alfreton a loving people, and opened my commission by preaching on faith, hope, and charity. Thank God, he saved me from confusion—gave me a little liberty, and some expectation of better days.

“ 25th. My soul is athirst for full salvation—but I feel my insufficiency for the work before me, and am constrained to sing—

“ Give me thy strength, O God of power,
Then let winds blow or tempests rage,” &c.

Preached at Buckland Hollow—a few people came together very late—and the work seemed very low.
‘ O Lord, revive thy work !’

“ 27th. This Saturday evening I have been reviewing the week. My mercies have been innumerable. My failings I cannot count—though the ties which bind me to my Saviour are many and strong indeed. But the blood of sprinkling is my trust. The thought of to-morrow leads me to cry, ‘ Lord, prepare me for my work, and fill my soul with humble love !’

“ Sunday, 28th. This morning I preached at Kilbourn, in the open air, to a large and attentive company, and felt the presence of my Master. At Woodhouse in the afternoon, and at Heanor at night. There was a gracious influence.

“ Monday, 29th. Glory be to God, I feel He is my all in all—and in his service there is perfect freedom. This evening I have preached for the first time in Belper ; the Lord has been very near, and the droppings of his sanctuary have been sweet to my taste. Nothing can exceed the kindness of the friends, and I believe we shall have a good work soon.

“ O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow.”

“ 30th. The blessing of heaven was felt by us at the Pottery to night. The Saviour’s presence is with me, and he gives me favour in the eyes of his people.

I feel my confidence of an approaching revival strengthened. I want entire dependance on God—and I need to be delivered from vain and wandering thoughts. Often, while both at prayer and at study, I feel difficulty in tying down my mind to the subject in hand.

“Fix, O fix my wandering mind,
To thy cross my spirit bind.”

“31st. At Milford to night—as the house is small, and every part of it was crowded with hearers, I found it almost intolerably hot. Had liberty in telling them of the ‘faithful saying.’ The gold is thine, O Lord, and the silver is thine, and the place is too strait for us—give us room !

“Sept. 1st. I am laid under infinite obligations to love and serve my Saviour. While riding to Wingfield Park, felt uncommonly happy in the Lord—and was led to pray fervently for those dear to me, and for the revival of the work of God in the circuit. Had a sweet time in preaching. Oh ! for perfect love !

“2nd. A most profitable day—spent in visiting from house to house, in company with my kind superintendent. We saw some in distressing circumstances, and my heart was humbled, and made more thankful to that God who maketh me in these respects to differ.

“Sunday, 4th. This morning, meeting classes for tickets at seven. Felt the presence of Jesus in the midst of us. Much profited and pleased by the

clear statements of religious experience by many of the people. At half-past ten the congregation in the Belper chapel was large, amounting to a thousand hearers at least. Cried aloud to them on the love of Christ. A melting season at the Pottery in the afternoon—wept with those that wept. In the great congregation at night, felt much need of divine help, and obtained it. We shall see better days here."

Unfortunately, no further entries were made in this diary for some time; but the "better days" anticipated in the last extract speedily came. The members of the church were quickened—the congregations greatly increased—the preaching of the gospel was accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit—and a remarkable revival of religion took place. The subject of this memoir laboured and rejoiced in it as a man who sought and obtained great spoil. It was no unusual thing during its progress, for men and women to roar under the word for the disquietude of their souls—and many in the prayer meetings held after the usual services, found peace with God. Often, too, would Mr. B.'s house be thronged, late on a Sabbath night, and early on a Monday morning, with people smitten by the sword of the Lord, who came in, and falling down upon their knees, cried:—"Oh, do pray for us." Many entered into that house penitent, and came out justified and rejoicing in God their Saviour. The holy fire was kindled throughout the circuit, and a considerable addition of souls to the Lord and to the society was the result. Mr. B. says,

under date of "July 10, 1815. Much time has elapsed since I wrote in this book—but it is impossible for me to tell the wonders God has wrought in that period. I deeply regret my neglect of this journal—for many of the occurrences in the revival which has taken place have been interesting and affecting, and worthy of remembrance. Suffice it to say, the Saviour has been among us—and we now have more than four hundred new names on our society roll. When we came to the circuit we could not find 500 members—we shall return to the Conference 900—besides having upwards of 100 on trial. Thanks be to God! At Duffield lovefeast, last Sunday, a man about forty-five told us that his father, aged eighty, and his son about sixteen, with himself, had sought and found salvation in the last few weeks. The visitations of divine love I have enjoyed, have been sweeter and more precious than I can describe. May I be faithful unto death!"

About the commencement of this glorious work, Mr. B. was conducting divine service in a chapel near Belper, one Sunday morning. While giving out the second hymn, the subject of which was the love of Christ, he felt impelled to address a few words to the congregation in exposition of the verses they were about to sing. While he was speaking, an extraordinary influence descended on the assembly. The place became a perfect "valley of weeping"—and in a short time it resounded with cries of penitence and with shouts of rejoicing. Finding it impossible to proceed in the ordinary manner, Mr. B. came down

from the pulpit, and began a prayer-meeting—and many were on that occasion, soundly converted from the error of their ways, and saved from death. It was for some time after, not uncommon to hear individuals say in lovefeasts, “I thank God I was at chapel that Sunday morning when Mr. Beech could not preach.” He was accustomed humourously to observe, that he was afraid those men would do him damage in their visits to other circuits, by conveying the impression, that he sometimes stuck fast in his preaching.

In July, 1815, his probation being ended, he proceeded to attend the Conference held in Manchester; that having passed the usual examinations, he might be recognized as a Wesleyan minister, and set apart to the sacred office. His soul was refreshed by communion with his fathers and brethren, and by the advices and ministrations of some of the more eminent among them; and he determined to devote himself more diligently to the discharge of his ministerial duties.

He was the guest, during his stay in Manchester, of an aged couple, who having realized a competence by industry, were spending the evening of their lives in ease and comfort. They had but recently become pew holders at Oldham-street chapel—and their ignorance of the character of the Wesleyan ministry, as well as their strange and unpolished manners, may be gathered from the following anecdote. When Mr. B. arrived at their dwelling, he was shown into a room, and his coming announced to the lady of the mansion.

An old woman soon hobbled in, leaning on a crutch, and he rose to make his obeisance. She answered his salutation by saying, in the purest Lancashire dialect—"Weel, I'm gloppened,* what they'n sent me sich a yung flirtin thing as yo fur." He replied, "It is quite true I am young, ma'am, but that is a fault of which I am improving every day;" but while he was speaking, his hostess turned round in dudgeon, and clattered with her crutch out of the room. He did not feel particularly elevated by this style of reception, but made the best of it—and in a few days, by accommodating himself to his hosts, and by his prayers and spiritual conversation, won their confidence and respect—and was made an instrument of good to their souls. The night before he left, the old lady apologized for her conduct towards him at first. "I'm fain,"† she said, "that they han sent yo—yo seen when I seed yo, I thaoot as yo wur a yung mon, yo would happen ha' gotten drunk, and stop'd out at neets; an if yo had, I conno tell what I mun ha' dun." On his departure the next morning, the old gentleman insisted on his receiving a handsome present.

The good work went on during his second year at Belper. At its commencement, an occurrence took place of some interest, as its results go far to demonstrate the folly and falsehood of the ecclesiastical claims put forth by the Tractarian faction in the Church of England. Some of the leading tenets of

that faction may, perhaps, fairly be expressed in the words—"No ministers without episcopal ordination—no salvation without sacraments,—and no sacraments save in the Church of England." Constantly, however, there are facts in connection with different bodies of nonconformists, which it would puzzle even Puseyite logic to reconcile with these dogmas. Take an instance—one Sunday, in September, 1815, an infant was presented to Mr. B. for baptism. He was at some loss how to proceed; for since his entrance on the itinerancy he had never seen that sacrament administered in a Wesleyan chapel—and prayer books were not then so generally used on such occasions as now—but most ministers conducted the service as seemed right in their own eyes. However, he began by speaking most earnestly and pathetically to the parents, of the value of the soul of the child committed to them—of the mighty influence their example would exert on its eternal destiny—and of the importance and necessity of their own personal consecration to the Saviour, to their happiness here and hereafter, and to their ability to train up their offspring aright. His words were with power. Having baptized the infant, he then called on the congregation to unite with him in prayer, that both she and her parents might be Christ's on earth, and might enjoy the rest and inheritance of saints in heaven. Some two months after, the father of this infant stood up in a lovefeast held in the neighbourhood, and said—"I thank God for my last child.

The address given at her baptism has been, by God's grace, the means of my conversion, and that of my wife. I can now testify, that being justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and I feel that the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth me from all sin."

But the good influence of this baptismal service did not stop here. This young man's parents were without God in the world, and he felt anxious for their salvation. He feared to speak to them—but he wrote a letter, telling them of his conversion, and earnestly beseeching them to seek the same blessing. His younger brother read the letter aloud to them, and the hearts of all three were broken with contrition, and they began to seek, and speedily found the pearl of great price. Here, then, were five persons brought from darkness into light, through the instrumentality of one of those ministers who have been uncourteously called by certain High-Church exclusives, "Ministers of hell"—and by means of a sacrament such men would term "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare." Certainly, no minister needs to doubt the validity of orders so endorsed by the Head of the church; nor can any man reasonably deny the church-character of a body, whose sacraments are made so eminently, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, "wells of salvation."

The sequel of this history may be briefly related. On one of Mr. B.'s visits to Belper twenty years after he had removed from it, he called upon Mr. W.,

the father of the child whose baptism has been noticed, and saw a young lady in the room. "This, Sir," said Mr. W., "is the child you had in your arms when delivering the address which led to my conversion." "I am happy to see her," said Mr. B., "and trust that in the flower of her youth she is bending towards the Sun of Righteousness." He rejoiced to learn from her own lips that it was so. Eight years after, he was engaged to preach occasional sermons in the same neighbourhood. On the previous Saturday evening, one of the ministers then on the circuit, expressed regret, that a funeral sermon he had to preach the next night, would prevent his worshipping with Mr. B. "A funeral sermon," said Mr. B., "to improve whose death?" "I dare say you would not know the gentleman," was the answer, "but he was a good man, and lived and died well: his name was Mr. W." "Ah! did I not know him," exclaimed Mr. B., "why, he was my son in the faith, and he will be one of the gems in my crown of rejoicing at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such instances of early usefulness refreshed him in after days—and it may be mentioned, that to the last year of his life he occasionally received letters from Belper and its neighbourhood, informing him of the happy end of one and another, to whom he had been the first instrument of salvation.

The time came for his removal from Belper; and by the Conference of 1816, he was, contrary to his expectations and wishes, appointed to Hereford. The

entry in his journal, under date of August 21st, in that year, is as follows: "On Monday night, I preached my last sermon in Belper, from 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.' The chapel was crowded, and I never felt more divinely assisted. Many tears were shed both on the part of the hearers and on mine. I am over-powered with a sense of the goodness of God, in reviewing the two years I have spent here. I came in fear and trembling; but the people bore with my imperfections, and the kindness they have shown me will never be effaced from my heart. We found 500 members—we leave 1370; the circuit was in debt—that has been paid off; a house has been furnished for me—three new chapels built—the expensive illness of my superintendent met—and there is still money in hand. 'It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes.' The care of that people flourished over me to the last, for they have hired a car to convey us to Hereford, 111 miles; and are sending a man to bring it back. The Lord reward them! I leave them most reluctantly."

On his arrival at Hereford, almost everything presented a contrast to the place he had left. It was a kind of Home Missionary station—the circuit stretched over a wide extent of country—the plan of working it was so arranged as to take him for thirty successive days and nights from his home—the societies were small and poor—the influence of the Church of

England was great, and Methodism was generally looked upon with contempt. There was no Wesleyan chapel in the city, but an old assembly room had been hired for public worship ; the house provided for the minister was small, and scantily furnished—and his income was on the lowest scale ; while bread and other necessaries were that year enormously high. The first Sabbath Mr. B. preached there, £10 were demanded from him for rent, on entering the room ; and the congregation numbered about twenty people in the morning, and about sixty in the evening. He records, that on returning home and thinking about Belper, he wept as the Israelites did, when they sat down by the rivers of Babylon, and remembered Jerusalem. But believing he was in the place where God had appointed—he regained his cheerfulness—and began heartily to discharge his duties. He soon saw the congregations increasing, and the societies multiplying ; and the two years he spent there—though full of toil and privation—were yet years of happiness and usefulness. God, too, raised him up friends. A pious Quaker visited him soon after his arrival, and said, “Thy people are poor—and thy income, I dare say, is small ; but as I believe thee to be a good and useful man, if thou ever need anything, if thou wilt tell me—thou shalt have it.” He thanked the good man—occasionally partook of his hospitality, but never drew farther on his kindness. An elderly lady, too, who had recently obtained considerable property, after long litigation, showed her

gratitude to God, by promoting the comfort of his servants: and she nursed Mrs. B., during a long sickness, with all the tenderness of a mother.

Some idea of his labours and privations may be gathered from the following extracts from his journal:

“ Sept. 8th. Breakfasted at Maniston—walked four miles to Ledbury—preached—walked five more, to where I expected to dine—found the people of the house from home, and could get no admittance. Went on till I reached Pool-hill, hoping to find somebody who would give me a crust and a cup of water—but, alas! though almost fainting with fatigue and hunger, none offered any food—and there was no public-house within two miles—so begged some water and went to preach at the chapel. It is the largest in the circuit, but has no society connected with it. Discovered to my surprise that a gentleman, having some influence there, had engaged a Baptist minister to officiate at three o’clock. The people waited for some time, but no minister coming, I mounted the pulpit, sang, prayed, and had spoken for half an hour before he arrived. He began the service anew—asked me to give out the hymns—and preached till six o’clock. I had just time to swallow some tea, and then hurry into the pulpit to preach—but though wearied, the Lord favoured me with his presence. This has been a toilsome day—but I shall have my reward.

“ 16th. Walked eighteen miles to see my family. Preached at night—many hearers affected.”

Occasionally, the preachers were persecuted and insulted, even in their public services—and the magistrates, (many of whom were clergymen) were unwilling to afford them protection or redress. At the town of Ross, when Mr. B. was preaching one Sunday night—a club-footed man of the name of Evans, carrying a foaming tankard of ale, went up to the pulpit—and presenting the tankard, said, “My master’s compliments, Sir, and he has sent you this to drink—he thinks as you shout so much, you must be very dry.” Mr. B. solemnly replied—“Man, beware you go not to that place of fire where you will not get a drop of water to cool your tongue”—and then proceeded with his discourse. The same evening he wrote to the man’s master, detailing the circumstances—and threatening to complain to a magistrate, unless Evans tendered an apology in person, before eleven o’clock next morning—but Evans never came, and justice could not be obtained. But as this, and other events, are related in a rhyming epistle he wrote to Mrs. B., we will insert the letter—not, assuredly, as a specimen of poetical powers—but as an illustration of the cheerful, happy, pious, character of the subject of this memoir.

“ I got to Ross quite late at night,
But true, I was in such a plight,
The rain came all the road;
But yet I feel my mind much eased,
I know the Father is well pleased
With me through Christ, my Lord.

“At Newent, on the Sabbath night,
I had an animating sight,
 The chapel almost full;
I told them what the balm could do,
The excellent Physician too—
 That he could make them whole.

“Next day I went to Ross again,
I told them there that Christ was slain
 That they might never die;
God clothed his word with mighty power,
We had a melting, precious shower,
 Sent down from Christ on high.

“Three joined us—mark well what I say,
Three others could not get away,
 The sword had cut so deep:
But whether they found liberty,
I had not strength to wait to see,
 But they *did* pray and weep.

“I should have thought it very strange,
If Satan had not shook his chains,
 To see his kingdom fall:
But that he did you now shall hear,
He sent a child of his with beer,
 That I might drink it all.

“I knew he could not wish me well,
For could they have that drink in hell,
 They’d serve themselves the first:
But they have none—they’ve shouted long,
For one small drop to cool their tongue—
 They cannot quench their thirst.

“He saw us heartily engage,
To cast him out with holy rage,
 From his beloved retreat:
And sent his servant—wicked Bob,
Who dearly loves a sinful job,
 Though tottering on club-feet.

“ Patience possessed my soul so well,
I felt such love I cannot tell,
 And nothing like affright :
But thinking that when I was gone,
In the same way they might go on,
 I sat me down to write.

“ ’Twas to Bob’s master that I wrote,
I know that he received my note,
 But did not send his man :
So to a magistrate I went,
To frighten Bob I only meant,
 But they do that who can.

“ When to the Rector’s door I came,
His man was sent to know my name —
 The business I was on —
I think the Justice plainly saw,
A Methodist was wanting law,
 But ah! I could have none.

“ The man returned, and thus did say, —
‘ His Rev’rence is gone out to day,
 At twelve he will come home’ —
Soon after twelve I went again,
And had my labour for my pain,
 The Justice did not come.

“ Permit me now to speak my doubt —
I doubt the Justice will be out,
 Yes! Justice and the law;
When preachers, such as I, apply,
To parsons for their liberty,
 They often out will go.

“ I do feel thankful when I think,
That ere they offered me their drink,
 I’d found a better store :
For Jacob’s well is in my soul,
I feel its virtue makes me whole,
 I drink, and thirst no more.

“ I wish now to be ascertained,
Whether a license was obtained
For our long room at Ross :
If not, we ought to look around,
For fear of paying twenty pound,
And that would be a cross.

“ But if a license can be found,
I think by asking Mr. Bound,*
We should be sure to know :
If there be none—this shall fall through,
I'll get one the first thing I do,
When to my home I go.

“ Kiss both the children oft for me,
I'll give them more when them I see—
I'm going now to preach :
My love to all my Christian friends,
My time is spent—my letter ends,
Believe me thine, Hugh Beech.”

There was another circumstance occurred about this time worthy of record—as it illustrates the misery of even temporary unfaithfulness, and the good that may result from kindly reproving sin. In one of the villages in the Hereford Circuit, John H—, a man in humble circumstances, opened his house for preaching by the Methodists. The clergyman of the place, who was also a magistrate, being displeased at the intrusion of Methodists into his parish, sent a document to John H—, containing these words: “ Mr. H— is informed by this note, that unless the preaching at his house be immediately discontinued, information shall be laid, and the penalty enforced.” The poor

* Then the Circuit Steward.

man came in great tribulation to Mr. B., who, having previously secured a license for the house as a place of worship, calmed his fears, and then wrote the following letter to the clergyman :—

“ REV. SIR,—You are hereby informed that the preaching at the dwelling-house of John H—, will *not* be immediately discontinued; and you are at perfect liberty to lay information and enforce the penalty, if you can.

“ I am sorry, Sir, that you should have given yourself any trouble to prevent the dissemination of the gospel of peace. As a minister of that gospel, should you not rejoice, Sir, to hear, that through its proclamation, (albeit the preachers follow not with you,) the drunkard has become sober, the swearer has ceased to blaspheme, the liar speaks the truth, the passionate learn in patience to possess their souls, savage husbands become kind and affectionate, and brutish parents are beginning to train up their children in the fear of God. I have had much pleasure, Sir, in hearing you spoken of as a zealous and faithful minister of the gospel; and I wish you much success in your labours. Highly shall I be delighted, when our short span of life is ended, to see your triumphant crown sparkling with many bright jewels;—ransomed souls, won to the Redeemer, by your preaching his cross. Go on, favoured servant of the Lord; and as we are soldiers of King Jesus, let us fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life! You, Sir, fill an exalted station in the army; allow me at least to act as a rifleman, and bring those down who may escape you. In my correspondence with Christian ministers of other churches, I have been accustomed to recommend for their perusal, ‘The Rev. John Wesley’s Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.’ Pardon the liberty I take in thus mentioning it to you.

“ Yours respectfully,

“ HUGH BEECH.”

The clergyman, a man of generous spirit, was pleased with this letter, and showed it to several

gentlemen at a Visitation dinner, which took place soon after. One of these, Squire B—, saw in it evidence that Methodist preachers were not precisely the men he had imagined; and he determined to hear them for himself. Accordingly, on Mr. B.'s next Sabbath visit to the village—the Squire was one of the congregation in the humble cottage. He was evidently affected under the word, and politely took Mr. B. to dine at his house. During dinner, he uttered a few words, from which his guest could not help inferring, that some of the provision before him had that morning been ordered from the butcher; and that the Sabbath was not duly hallowed in the family. Mr. B. felt that he ought not to suffer this sin to pass unreproved; but at the same time, the station of his host somewhat overawed him, and the kindness manifested towards him made him shrink from uttering words that might be deemed disrespectful and ungrateful. Feeling struggled with duty, and at length won the victory—for he left the house without saying anything on the subject. But his conscience was wounded, and he became an uneasy, restless, miserable man. The divine injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbour," thundered day and night in his ears. He found no peace till his next visit to the place. The Squire again attended the service, and anew offered his hospitality to the preacher. Mr. B. said, "Sir, I am glad we meet once more—my last visit at your house has cost me more pain than I can express—and

had you passed into eternity before this interview, you would have been a swift witness before God against me." The gentleman, with an air of astonishment and concern, asked an explanation. Mr. B. gave him one, and then in the gentlest manner reproved the Sabbath desecration referred to. The Squire said, "Sir, I am obliged to you—you are right—and I will sanction nothing of the kind again in my house." This reproof led him to think of other sins of which he had been guilty—and to resolve to forsake them. Though his company was sought after, and he was much esteemed by a wide circle of friends—he at once broke off association with the ungodly—united himself to the Wesleyan society, and soon became a new man in Christ Jesus. He afterwards held the offices of leader and local preacher, and was the instrument of considerable good in the neighbourhood. Not many years elapsed before he died in the faith at Aberystwith—but on his death-bed he told one of the ministers who visited him, that he owed his conversion to the reproof before mentioned—and in his will he bequeathed four hundred pounds to erect a small chapel, on any site deemed most eligible, within a mile of his residence. That chapel was opened by Mr. B., who travelled far to preach on the occasion—and who was disposed to exclaim, on seeing the sanctuary and the congregation, and on remembering the few who were accustomed to assemble in former days, in the humble cottage of John H—, "What hath God wrought?" We

may add, in the language of Scripture, “A word spoken in due season, how good is it!” “Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.”

CHAPTER FIFTH.

From Hereford, Mr. B. was removed, in 1818, to Wrexham, in Wales. Here he had no colleague—but with the exception of occasional exchanges with the brethren stationed at Oswestry and Whitchurch, was the only ministerial supply with which the Wesleyans in that circuit were favoured. He remained three years at Wrexham, and had the gratification of seeing the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands. He read much and studied hard—preached often in the open air—established societies in several places which had been unvisited by his predecessors—succeeded in overcoming opposition, in some cases formidable, on account of the influential quarters from whence it came; and when his term of labour had expired, he left the place amid the tears, prayers, and blessings of many of the people—among the survivors of whom his name is to this day held in grateful remembrance. Some of those who were then children, and whom he interested and impressed by his kind notice, and by his cheerful, pious, and instructive

conversation, yet speak of him with enthusiasm—and in one instance, when his earthly career was just closing, manifested towards him a marked and generous affection.

A few brief extracts from his Journal, will exhibit something of his piety, trials, labours, and success, while in this circuit :—

“ April 3rd, 1819. “ I am the most unworthy of the servants of the Lord—and often wonder how he can use such a worm to promote his glory—yet so it is—we have had a large increase this quarter, and everything looks promising. I fear, however, some of our leading people are too much absorbed in worldly things. If we can overcome this, we shall do better yet. Lord, help me to live to thee and for thee !

“ 4th. This morning, at the early prayer meeting was filled with love; and this evening, after preaching, saw several wounded by the sword of the Spirit, earnestly desiring liberty. ‘ O Jesus, ride on, till all are subdued.’

“ 23rd. A day of trial. At Penley, good brother C—, being about to be driven from his farm by his landlord, Lord K—n, for having preaching in his house—I went over to obtain another place to preach in—but as almost the entire village belongs to his lordship and another gentleman,—and as the inhabitants are fearful of being persecuted, I could not succeed. My heart was oppressed beyond expression—I dare not give up the place, unless compelled;

because here the fields are white unto the harvest. Coming home, I met an old man named Carr, who has heard me a few times. He is a small freeholder, and he offered to sell me some land for a chapel. I have a little money, and feel a strong inclination to purchase it. Lord, direct me aright in this matter!

“24th. Encouraged by the friends here, I have bought the land; and am now a freeholder in the county of Flint.

“25th. This has been a Sabbath—a day honourable and full of delights to my soul. Preached at Penley this morning—many of the people came in low spirits, supposing this would be the last Methodist service in the village. The power of the Lord was present during the sermon; and when at its close I told them I had purchased ground for a chapel, their joy was so great as to affect me to witness. We must now have a chapel, or our enemies will triumph, and the friends of Zion will mourn. I wish I could build at my own expense—for I want ‘not their’s, but them;’ but I will beat up among my friends. Good was done this evening at the service. ‘Thine, O Lord, be the glory.’

“October 20th. Chapel finished at Penley, with little debt on it. Many friends have subscribed towards its erection. The enemies of our cause are confounded—the little flock is kept together, and I wonder and adore. Since I sent Lord K—‘Benson’s Apology for Methodism,’ we have had no opposition. Glory be to God!

“ August 18th, 1821. Have taken leave of my friends at Wrexham, after labouring among them for three years, during which God has helped and blessed me. I found 130 members—I leave 283 : the circuit was in debt—that has been paid off ; a horse has been kept for me, and they have money in hand. I feel much love to them, and I pray the lambs of the flock may be preserved in the fold until that day !”

While at Wrexham he gave some advice in a singular case—which, for the gratification of the credulous and the curious in occult phenomena, we will narrate—as it is a tolerably well-authenticated ghost story. Among the members of Mrs. B.’s class, there were a mother and a daughter, both respectable and pious women. Somewhere about Christmas, 1819, the mother was one day carrying a dish into the cellar of her house. Her foot slipped, and she fell—the dish was broken—a fragment severed an artery in her neck, and in a few minutes she died. This tragical occurrence so affected the daughter, that her spirits became greatly depressed. As time wore on, her dejection increased, instead of diminishing, and threatened serious injury to her health. Being questioned on the subject by Mrs. B., she stated her melancholy arose from seeing the apparition of her late mother, whenever, in the dusk of the evening, she went alone to her chamber. Mr. B. hearing this, made some further enquiries ; and as the poor woman persisted in the story, with evident marks of sincerity ; and as she declared, moreover, she had never been

able to summon resolution to address the spectre—he advised her, on its next appearance, to adjure it, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to tell why it haunted her. Not long after, she stated to him, that after many struggles with her terrors, she at length had acted according to his counsel—and that the apparition had replied—“M—,” calling her by name, “why did you not speak to me before? I am come for your good,—you have been troubled about my eternal state—but I am happy: you are in some difficulty about money—but if you will examine the sleeve of such a gown,” describing its pattern, “you will find stitched in it something that will relieve you,”—and having said this, immediately vanished. She further declared, that since that time she had never seen the appearance—and that in the sleeve indicated she had found a number of one pound notes. Such is the substance of the anecdote as narrated by Mr. B., and he was accustomed to add, that the lady in question never fully recovered her health, but died some years after, having maintained an unblemished Christian character to the last.

Writing, as we happen to be, with the fingers of the clock pointing to the “noon of night”—and being, moreover, the only waking human creature in our house—and occasionally hearing, as we do, those low, mysterious, preternatural sounds, which often at this hour come out, like uneasy spirits, from stairs and floors and papered walls, to disturb an otherwise profound silence—we are scarcely inclined to pro-

pound at length any theory on the subject of apparitions. We may, however, observe on the case before us, that it appears rather puzzling, that in order to solve a disagreeable doubt, so frightful an expedient should have been adopted, and that to remove a pecuniary embarrassment—so unusual a step should have been taken,—a step apparently occasioning all the suffering of a mortal sickness, and all the expenditure of medical attendance and a funeral. We never could understand why ghosts should be so deeply interested in title-deeds, wills, small hoards of money, and other exceedingly mundane affairs. Our impression is, that in the invisible world there are realities great and solemn enough to fasten the human spirit there in all its thoughts, sensibilities and faculties. The doom of immortality, just pronounced, must surely be so absorbing as to banish all recollection, at least for some time, of things pertaining to the filthy lucre of earth. And yet the majority of ghost stories represent spirits who have just crossed the threshold of the next world, coming back again, “re-visiting the glimpses of the moon,” that they may busy themselves about something that perishes in the using—endeavouring to make one man rich and another poor—while within their grasp are the things that endure for ever. Nor could we ever fathom the reason why apparitions should need to be spoken to, before unfolding their burden. It seems inexplicable, that they should be able to obtrude themselves unexpectedly, repeatedly, and by no means agreeably,

on human vision ; and at the same time, should require the stimulus of adjuration and question to render their message audible to human ears. We incline to suppose, that in the case before us, the ghost was the offspring of imagination—or in other words, of that ascertained malady of the brain and nervous system, in which spectral illusions are not uncommon—and which the sudden catastrophe which had overtaken the mother, would be likely to engender, or develope in the daughter—though, certainly, on this supposition, the discovery of the money remains unexplained.

In reference to the subject of apparitions in general—it is undeniable that a belief in their reality has obtained largely in the world. Mr. Wesley, among other great and good men, shared in this faith. The mysterious disturbances in his father's house at Epworth, probably fostered, if they did not originate, that leaning towards the marvellous—traces of which are to be met with in his Journals. For us to deny the possibility of apparitions, and to affirm, that all accounts of such occurrences are fabulous, would be neither becoming nor philosophical. That there is an invisible world, peopled by spirits, both good and evil—that some of these good spirits are commissioned to minister to “heirs of salvation,” and that some of the evil ones are permitted to tempt, and possibly, otherwise to annoy the children of men,—are with us matters of solemn belief—because they are taught in the word of God. But whether any of the inhabitants

of that world, are occasionally allowed to make themselves visible or audible to men, is with us a doubtful point; but assuming it to be so—we can scarcely believe those so permitted to be human spirits. The theory of Defoe—that human spirits visit not again the scene of their probation—cruelly ignoring though it does, all those beautiful imaginations which the poetry of love has created, about the tender watchfulness of departed friends—seems most consistent with reason and with Scripture. “For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything; neither have they any more a reward: for the memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love and their hatred and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.” Eccles. ix. 5, 6.

Assuming certain recorded appearances and noises to have been supernatural—it is not necessary to attribute them to human spirits. Reasoning by analogy—there is no improbability in the conclusion, that as among the different species of the inhabitants of this world, there are varied degrees of intelligence, goodness, playfulness, mischievousness, and vice—so among different species of the inhabitants of the invisible world, there may be analogous diversities of the same qualities. Isaac Taylor, whose opinions on this subject are entitled to attention, because he has brought to bear upon it a mind of more than ordinary power—and of no small education in philosophic investigation—holds it probable,

that there may be among them some creatures as mischievous as monkeys, and only a single step above brutes in intelligence. Indeed, he accounts for the disturbances at Epworth, by supposing one of these wicked sprites, by accident or direction, to have found his way there. We confess to having long had a dim, and it may be, an irreverent notion, that there were some embodied human beings, in or near that unquiet parsonage, who knew more about the pranks of "Old Jeffrey," than they ever told—just as we suspect the aforetime drumming in the house of Mr. Mompesson, at Tedworth, was akin to the detected imposture of the Cock Lane Ghost—but we may be mistaken. Supernatural visitations may, perhaps, be permitted with great rarity—but we scarcely think the visitants are human spirits. But we speak with diffidence, for—

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamt of in 'our' philosophy."

To return from this digression—in August, 1821, Mr. Beech began his labours at Rochdale, in Lancashire, to which circuit he had just been appointed. Here he remained three years, and was both happy and useful among the people of his charge. He was favoured, too, in having for his colleagues the Rev. Messrs. Philip Garrett and Robert Pilter—both of whom have gone to their reward. Mr. Garrett was a little, round man, with a decided waddle in his walk, full of benevolence—of buoyant spirits—and endowed with no inconsiderable mental powers. As a preacher,

he was original, instructive, generally profitable—but occasionally quaint, and even odd and amusing. He was an accomplished astronomer—was well versed in mathematics—had published a valuable work on logarithms—and is pronounced by Dr. A. Clarke, in his Commentary, to have been of rare skill and ingenuity as a diallist. Witty, humorous, and smart in reply; he was a man whom hypercritics had better not have provoked! In one of his discourses, he had uttered the aphorism, that every thing grand is simple. A certain physician, wearing a wig of most elaborate construction, animadverted, in Mr. G.'s presence, on several parts of his sermon—and denying the maxim just quoted—asked him to furnish an illustration of its truth. “I can easily do that, Sir,” said Mr. G., “there is, for instance, your head, Doctor; everybody may see it is very grand—and nobody will doubt it is very simple.” At a time of excitement and division in the Wesleyan church—when the malcontents presented him with a vote of thanks for some supposed liberality in his public conduct—he published a letter in reply, declaring that their thanks were “as grateful to his feelings as a bottle of vitriol poured upon his head; and worse, by ten thousand times, than being placed for half a year in the most exalted pillory that could be erected.” A specimen of his acuteness in getting out of a difficulty may be given. When in the Epworth circuit, his colleague was for some reason unable to perform his ministerial duties, and it became necessary for

Mr. G. to have the vacant pulpits filled up by another. Either from inadvertence, or from ignorance of the usual forms, he wrote direct to the President of the Conference for a supply. The late Rev. Francis Wrigley, then chairman of the Lincolnshire district, felt his dignity slighted, as the application ought to have gone through him, and received his endorsement; and accordingly he complained of the omission at the next meeting of the district committee, in no very gentle tones. Mr. G. acknowledged his error; but said the thing hardly deserved notice, for he did not consider his letter to the President worth a groat. "No," retorted Mr. W., "it was not worth a straw!" "Well then," replied Mr. G., "let us shake hands, it would be very foolish for us to quarrel about a straw, Sir!"

Mr. Pilter, Mr. B.'s other colleague, was a tall, good-looking man, with a fine voice—fervent in the pulpit—a good, and often a powerful and impressive preacher. He was of an affectionate disposition, and had a heart full of sympathy for the distressed—and to his honour it may be recorded, that he laboured hard and long to secure a better provision for the worn out ministers, and minister's widows, of the body to which he belonged—and was largely instrumental in bringing about the improvement which has taken place in the condition of that meritorious, but too long, comparatively neglected class. He had the happy art of administering rebuke in that half-pleasant, half-serious manner, which, while it takes

effect, renders it impossible for its recipient to kick or show temper, without getting the reputation of a very touchy and ill-conditioned man. There was much good-humoured sarcasm about him, and he could sometimes detect and expose a fallacy with great acuteness and skill. We remember, in 1838, when the movement in celebration of the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism was commencing, he received a letter from a then brother minister, an eloquent man, and supposed to plume himself on his dialectical skill—which we will give, with the answer, as that will illustrate what we have just written. The letter contained these words:—“Dear Sir—I do not approve of this centenary movement. I argue thus—either Methodism is Christianity, or it is not Christianity. If it is not Christianity, it is a monstrous system, and the sooner it is destroyed the better. If it is Christianity, it is absurd to say it is one hundred years old, for it took its rise in the times of Christ and the Apostles.”

To this Mr. P. replied:—“Dear Sir—I argue thus—either Mr. —,” mentioning the name of his correspondent—“is a man, or he is not a man. If he is not a man, he is a monster, and the sooner he is destroyed the better. If he is a man, it is absurd to say he is forty-eight years old—for he took his rise in the times of Adam and Eve.” Mr. P. died in the faith at Liseaux, in France, in 1846.

With these brethren Mr. B. lived in harmony during his sojourn in Rochdale. Mr. Garrett inocu-

lated him with a love of astronomy—he became learned in telescopes, and for many years afterwards was a confirmed star-gazer, and maintained a regular correspondence, on astronomical subjects, with the late Professor Dick, and others distinguished for their devotion to that noble science. In a letter addressed to him by that gentleman in 1826, there is a passage which is interesting, as it shows how its writer had a foreshadowing of the marvellous discovery of the electric telegraph. After speaking of the desirableness of a swift communication of messages and information—and of the possibility of the human voice being heard, in articulate sounds, at vast distances, by means of acoustic tunnels—the Professor adds—“None can tell the powers of other agents, electricity for instance.” But the truth is—that long before Dick’s time, indeed, a century and a half ago, something, very much resembling in some respects, the electric telegraph was suggested. Addison, writing in the “Spectator,” under date of December 6th, 1711, refers to an account given by Strada, in his *Prolusions*, of a chimerical correspondence between two friends, maintained in a manner worthy of being noted; because illustrative of the truth, that coming discoveries, as well as events, “throw their shadows before.” Strada represents these two friends as obtaining the “help of a certain loadstone, which had such virtue in it, that if it touched two several needles, when one of the needles so touched began to move, the other, though at never so great a distance,

moved at the same time, and in the same manner. He tells us, that the two friends, being each of them possessed of one of these needles, made a kind of dial-plate, inscribing it with the four and twenty letters, in the same manner as the hours of the day are marked upon the ordinary dial-plate. They then fixed one of the needles on each of these plates in such a manner that it could move round without impediment, so as to touch any of the four and twenty letters. Upon their separating from one another into distant countries, they agreed to withdraw themselves into their closets at a certain hour of the day, and to converse with one another by means of this invention. Accordingly, when they were some hundred miles asunder, each of them shut himself up in his closet, at the time appointed, and immediately cast his eye upon his dial-plate. If he had a mind to write anything to his friend, he directed his needle to every letter that formed the words, which he had occasion for, making a little pause at the end of every word or sentence, to avoid confusion. The friend in the meanwhile saw his own sympathetic needle moving of itself to every letter which that of his correspondent pointed at. By this means they talked together across a whole continent, and conveyed their thoughts to one another in an instant, over cities or mountains, seas or deserts." To this remarkable scientific anticipation, we may just add, that electric telegraphs, with dial-plates, made in the manner here suggested, with the letters of the alphabet engraved

upon them, to which the needles are directed by the operator, are in use, throughout Prussia, at this day.

But while Mr. Beech, as stated above, was amusing himself and obtaining instruction by studying astronomy—he was diligently attending to his proper work of preaching the gospel, and promoting the salvation of souls. He endeavoured to improve his manner of speaking. An entry in his diary, bearing on this subject, is curious:—

Sept. 20th, 1821. Last night I was thinking on the manner of my public speaking. I am often loud and vehement, and have a bad habit of grinding particular words between my teeth—which cannot be pleasant to my hearers. I went to sleep, determining to conquer it, and I dreamed a dream. I thought I was sitting in a room behind the shop of one of my friends here. I fancied Mr. Jabez Bunting entered the shop, and said to my friend, “I have been at your chapel, and was grieved to hear Mr. Beech deliver the glorious truths of the gospel so awkwardly.” When I awoke, I was greatly concerned, for the impression on my mind was like that of reality. I hope to benefit even by a dream, and trust it may stimulate me to strive to preach in a manner not unbecoming my message; and, above all, so as to save souls.”

There can be no doubt that skill in elocution is much to be desired by ministers of the gospel—because it often exercises an attractive influence, and brings individuals to hear words whereby they may be saved, who otherwise would be absent from the

sanctuary. Perhaps most public speakers may divest themselves of offensive peculiarities of delivery—but that all can become attractive elocutionists is a point on which we entertain some doubt—notwithstanding the oft-quoted example of Demosthenes. There are certain natural imperfections which art may diminish, but cannot remove—and there are individuals of a temperament so nervous, that the very consciousness of awkwardness in public, increases the acuteness and prominence of their angles. While preachers should endeavour to reduce any eccentricities and asperities which may mark their delivery—it by no means follows, that any efforts they make, will render them accomplished orators. Nor do we suppose the Head of the Church ever intended his gospel to be preached only by elocutionary artists. He who at first employed in this work the zealous and ready Peter—the eloquent Apollos—and the still greater Paul, whose bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible; yet sends forth men of similarly diversified types. There are instances of preachers of unpolished manner, but of strong minds and of right hearts, who have been more successful in winning souls, than men of higher intellectual attributes, of more cultivated style, and possibly, of equal piety. Many people belong to a mental and emotional class, on which a Casson will be more effective than a Chrysostom—a Newton, or a Watson. Offensive peculiarities are to be eschewed by all—but in many the higher graces of oratory are neither attainable nor necessary.

It is to be feared, that in these days there is a tendency to fastidiousness, both as to the manner and matter of preaching, in many congregations. This arises, partly from want of discrimination between the relative importance of the message of reconciliation, and the style in which it may be delivered; partly, from a taste for the beautiful and obscure, generated by popular poets and Continental neologists; and partly from causes lying deep in the carnal mind. A “dim religious light,” but not that of Milton, is in great request among them. They do not care so much what a preacher says, as how he says it. They put little value on a fragment of the pure ore of evangelical truth, as it comes from the mine of the Bible—they must have it amalgamated with a “vain philosophy”—or placed in the setting of a pinchbeck eloquence—or they will not condescend to accept it. If these men felt themselves spiritually poor—if their rebellion against God grieved their hearts and alarmed their consciences—if they were penetrated with their need of the atoning blood of Christ, and the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit—they would eagerly drink in the words of mercy and of power coming from God’s servants—without being offended by an unmusical tone, or an uncouth gesture, or a sentence simple enough to be easily understood. There is also a danger of the fastidiousness of the pew acting on the pulpit, and producing a style of preaching in which gospel truth will be undiscoverable, amid either the dark clouds

of German mysticism, or the glitter and glare of bombastic eloquence.

But while Mr. B. was anxious to improve the manner of his public ministry—and especially to save souls by it,—he was equally anxious to promote the spiritual improvement of the young people of his charge. In addition to a large class of children on a Saturday afternoon—he met at five o'clock every Monday morning, a number of young local preachers, and endeavoured to ground them in that Wesleyan Theology they were beginning to teach. Considering his early disadvantages—his active habits, and the extent of some of his circuits—he was by no means a contemptible theologian—but was competent to direct the studies of tyros in this divine science. Many of the young men instructed by him in this and other circuits, are now able ministers of the New Testament—some in this country, and others in America—and more than two or three of them have gratefully acknowledged their obligations to him on this account.

It was while in Rochdale that death first entered his household. After a brief illness his youngest son was taken to a better world. He felt this stroke as a man—but he bore it as a Christian. It was sanctified to him—and heaven had another attraction to his soul. He records this bereavement in these words:

“ March 17th, 1822. Yesterday, the Lord took from us the child he had lent for three years. He was a lovely boy—and by a thousand engaging ways

entwined himself with our affections.. I have often sympathized with others in similar circumstances—but never supposed the stroke was so heavy. However, I must be resigned—though with busy memory recalling his words and ways, I find it hard work. The Lord help me, and my dear wife, who is overwhelmed with grief. It is a pleasure to think that we have had for three years the company of one now an angel. How much better is his state than ours ! We are toiling to make the blest shore—he is landed : we are in danger—he is safe : we are fearful of shipwreck—he is as far from fear as from danger : we worship Jehovah under a veil—his eyes see the King in his beauty. He cannot return to me—I may go to him. May I be more devoted to Christ and his work than ever—that some day I may join those who have gone before ! ‘ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’ ”

The succeeding entries show increased devoutness, and mention numerous instances of success in his ministry. Among others there is one which may be given, as tending to prove that a minister’s own feelings will not always furnish a safe index as to the power which may then and there accompany the gospel he proclaims.

“ May 9th. I am distressed, and scarce know what to do. While preaching in the town to night, I seemed altogether left to myself. No feeling—no power—hard work to get on at all—little good can be expected from such preaching ; my soul is dis-

quieted within me. * * * * * After writing the above, I was called into another room, and found there a woman in deep distress about her soul. She had been for years a member of the congregation, but had never been convinced of her sins, and of her need of Christ's atonement, till she heard the sermon to night. I prayed with her—pointed her to Jesus as a present Saviour—she was a little comforted—but obtained no distinct assurance of pardon and adoption. May I be grateful for this encouragement, and learn from it, than when I am weakest and lowest, God may be making his own word quick and powerful! And may this poor woman, just a step from the kingdom, be soon brought into the liberty wherewith Christ maketh his people free!"

Human life is something like an April day—alternately sunny and showery—and several incidents occurred about this time, which afforded Mr. B. amusement, and diverted his mind from the contemplation of his recent bereavement. There has long been a popular prejudice, to the effect, that Wesleyan ministers are insatiable in their demands, and like the daughters of the horseleech, continually crying, "Give! give!" In the early days of Methodism, this prejudice attributed to the first itinerants no mean regard for certain creature comforts—and represented them as capable of achieving astonishing exploits as trenchermen. Very possibly their mode of life—involving long journeys, and incessant

preachings—might render those who were not speedily injured by over-exertion—men of an appetite and a digestion, which some of their sedentary and dyspeptic successors might regard with envy. They were supposed, occasionally, to eat their disciples out of house and home. Their very saddlebags were suspected to contain some more substantial edibles, than the attenuated sandwiches with which modern travellers are wont to sustain the wear and tear of the way. Now and then, discontented persons, within the body, have adopted, or at least given currency to this prejudice, though it may be observed, those parties have seldom had sufficient hospitality to test its truth. Many years ago, there was a local preacher in Manchester, who was accustomed to entertain his hosts in various parts of the circuit where he had been officiating, with descanting upon the failings of his ministers—and arriving at the climax of his indictment, was wont to exclaim, “They’re a set o’ locusts!” This coming to the ears of the Superintendent of the circuit, he meekly reproved the offender for railing—and knowing he was an ignorant man, and supposing him hardly aware of the force of the opprobrious language he had employed, asked—“Do you know what a locust is?” “Whoy, I conno say ‘at I do hexactly,” was the answer, “but I believe its summat ‘at ates au up afore it.”

In these days, however, this prejudice does not charge Wesleyan ministers with this vulgar voracity; but only with endless appeals to the pockets of their

people, on behalf of charitable institutions. And it must be confessed that what with Schools, Missions, both home and foreign, Chapels, *cum multis aliis*—the demands on the Christian liberality of Wesleyans, are neither few nor small—and as, unhappily, the subscriptions to many of these objects, can only be raised by the public appeals, or private applications of ministers—some colour is given to the calumny that they are always seeking after money. One Sabbath, Mr. B. had to preach twice at a school anniversary, in the neighbourhood of Rochdale. The managers told him the sum they needed to relieve them from debt, and to carry on the institution another year. At the first service the collection amounted to more than that sum. At the second service, when the usual time for receiving the contributions arrived, Mr. B. told the congregation, he was ashamed to beg, inasmuch as their generosity in the afternoon, had furnished means to sustain the school till the next anniversary. The managers looked exceedingly blank. “However,” he continued, “as I know, whatever you give will be expended in improving and enlarging the school, the collectors had better go round and receive your donations.” As he was walking home that night, he overheard two men in conversation. “Weel, Jeeams,” said one, “I’ve seen to neet what I nivir thaoot I should ha’ seen!” “What’s that, mon?” enquired the other. “Why, “I’ve seen a Methody preacher ’at knows when he’s getten’ enugh.”

About this time, too, Mr. B set out one morning on horseback, in company with Mr. Garrett, to attend a Missionary meeting near Bacup. In a populous village, they were passing a theatrical booth, when the musicians struck up, "God save the King." Mr. Garrett's horse, disliking crowds and noise, became restive, and threatened to unseat his rider. "Stop," shouted Mr. G., at the top of his clear voice, "Stop, don't you see my horse is a Radical? he cannot bear that tune—'God save the King' will drive him mad!" The musicians ceased their performance to laugh, and so that peril was escaped.

That evening, a singular scene occurred at the meeting. A venerable minister was speaking, and after depicting the moral wretchedness of the heathen, was earnestly asking the assembly whether they would not contribute to send that gospel, which would alleviate their misery. A woman, seated just below the platform, and one of whose arms was paralyzed, excited by what she had heard, shouted, "I will, take this!"—holding up a piece of money. The aged minister bent over the platform rail to receive it, when that flimsy support giving way, he fell into the pew beneath. The woman started up—and lifting both arms, exclaimed, "A miracle—the man of God has touched my withered arm, and it is healed!" One may suppose the sensation such an announcement would create. But admitting a sudden restoration from paralytic seizure in this case—it is of course explicable, without attributing to the minister in

question any miraculous gifts of healing. No doubt the woman, in fear of being crushed by the falling mass—suddenly stretched out her hands, in obedience to the instinct of self-preservation, and the combined terror and effort restored the suspended animation of the limb, and wrought the cure. The case is similar to that recorded of the dumb son of Crœsus—who, when a soldier was about to stab the ancient “man of money,” in an agony of filial affection and fear, cried out, “Spare my father!”

When Mr. B.’s term at Rochdale was drawing to its close, he received many invitations to different circuits—and out of these, he accepted one to Bury, probably partly influenced by its contiguity to Rochdale. To this Circuit he was appointed by the Conference of 1824. He left Rochdale with regret—for the people had treated him with marked kindness; he had been the instrument of good to many—and it was in his heart to have lived and died with them: but in this, as in many other cases, the inexorable rule of itinerancy separated very friends. At his departure everything seemed prosperous—the congregations were so large as to require increased accommodation—the circuit was as a garden which the Lord had blessed; among the mature, the fruits of righteousness abounded—and among the young, much beautiful blossom of piety was apparent. Unhappily, through disastrous influences, a blight fell upon that garden some years afterwards—but it has recovered from the baneful breath. In the history of particular

churches, it sometimes happens, that the fruitful field becomes a wilderness—and then again, the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. But happiest of all are the churches which have no alternations, but with whom a perpetual summer reigns! Fitting types are they of that Church triumphant which has no winter—and to whose members there is no night!

CHAPTER SIXTH.

We come to a period of some years in the history of Mr. Beech, of the events of which we have been able to gather little information. His Journal, which never was kept with regularity, now degenerates into mere memoranda of business—while the correspondence he maintained during this time has become inaccessible, from the removal or death of many of his friends. As our object, however, is mainly to record the more prominent occurrences of his life and labours, and especially such as illustrate his character—and to do this with a brevity our gossiping tendencies have hitherto prevented us from achieving—it will doubtless be pleasing to our readers, if we traverse part of the space yet remaining to us, with less detail and more rapidity.

The aspect of Methodist affairs in the Bury circuit, at his entrance on it, was decidedly unfavourable. An unhappy difference, on trivial points, had existed between his ministerial predecessors—the

views of each had been espoused by sections of the society ; bickerings had followed, and as is invariably the case in such circumstances, the religion of both parties had been deteriorated. Mr. B. commenced his ministry, determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. His first sermon was instrumental in the conversion of one who had been a member for thirteen years, but who had never obtained an assurance of the forgiveness of sins. He accepted this as a token for good, and went on his way encouraged. Always zealously affected in his Master's service, he spared no effort of which he was capable, either in or out of the pulpit, to promote the welfare of the flock of which he was appointed an under-shepherd. His labours met with their usual acceptance—isolated instances of success occurred, but no general revival of religion took place. The truth was—those were “evil days” in that district of the country—and the minds of multitudes were occupied by other topics than the claims of religion. It is well known that Bury is situated within the focus of the cotton manufacture. During the last century, that manufacture has not only been almost incredibly increased—but it has undergone a revolution, as to the machinery of production. Previous to 1770, cotton could only be spun by the distaff and spindle—and one individual could draw out but a single thread at a time. About the same period the foreign demand for cotton goods became much larger than it had ever been—and exportation pro-

ceeding briskly, soon overtook the power of production, which was in reality limited by the capabilities of the spinning-wheel, and by the diligence, or otherwise of our grandmothers. The ingenuity and perseverance of Sir Richard Arkwright, however, established spinning by machinery—and his contrivances, combined with the yet more valuable invention of the steam-engine by Watts, a few years later—spun cotton enough to supply all the weavers in Lancashire with both warp and weft—and to relieve the dames and maidens of that day from their hereditary vas-salage to the distaff. Then came Dr. Cartwright's power-loom—which, however, was not generally used till some years of the present century had elapsed—and which, associated with the inventions just mentioned, has raised the cotton manufacture to its present enormous extent and importance. It is almost unnecessary to remark, that people gaining their livelihood by handicrafts, with much of the short-sightedness, and with something too of the selfishness, which often characterize Trades Unions, have almost invariably opposed the application of machinery to their particular arts—and have attributed every depression of their trades, which may have subsequently occurred, to the over-production such application has occasioned—though a smattering of political economy would have taught them that such depression may arise from other causes. Numerous have been the riots, and not a few the deeds of darkness, resulting from such misapprehension. During

the time of Mr. B.'s residence in Bury, the popular delusion alluded to was rampant. A commercial panic had occurred—confidence had been shaken—trade had received a sudden check—employment had failed, multitudes who, long plagued with the curse of improvidence, saw nothing but privation, debt, or starvation before them. Naturally dissatisfied at the prospect—they began to ponder its probable cause, and how to prevent its recurrence. With little difficulty, and without much help from the will-o'-wisp lanterns of demagogues, they arrived at the conclusion that machinery lay at the root of their sufferings; though, as they happened to have felt in former days the difficulty of obtaining an adequate supply of spun cotton, they passed by the "jenny," and vented their execrations on the power-loom. In a short time they advanced from execration to destruction. Multitudes met together in open day—and forming mobs, roamed through the country—breaking into mills, and demolishing the obnoxious machines. Bury shared in, and suffered by these illegal movements. The civil power was unable to protect the property of some of its inhabitants—and the aid of the military was obtained. The streets were patrolled by mounted dragoons day and night—and a collision between the military and the populace took place, in which blood was shed. Of course, this turbulence was unfavourable in itself to the spread of religion—besides exerting a disastrous collateral influence on the church, by turning away the hearts of the people from those ministers

who were advocates of order—and this may partly account for the lack of much increase to the Wesleyan society, during the years Mr. B. was stationed in Bury.

At this time, also, he was much affected by the affliction of his excellent wife, whose life long hung as in a balance—and though she was mercifully spared for many years after—yet the apprehension of her probable death, deeply depressed his spirits. There were, too, some pecuniary losses he sustained, which perplexed and troubled him. He had rendered himself responsible for a person who desired, and, as he thought, deserved his assistance: and to meet those responsibilities, he was compelled to draw upon the little property he had received with his wife. Solomon was a wise man, and there are multitudes who have had in their history a tardy and unpleasant appreciation of the truth of that proverb—"He that is surety for a stranger, shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretiship is sure,"—and Mr. B. went to swell the number. It is, as a rule, a hazardous thing to take in this way on one's own shoulder, the burden of others; the removal of their responsibility often breaks the mainspring of their exertion and economy—and sometimes issues in serious injury to the obliging party, and gives occasion for the development of the most odious ingratitude. To this rule, as to most others, there are exceptions—but every wise man, in ordinary circumstances, will be careful to walk by the rule, and not by the exception. No

doubt, the diminution of his comparatively small resources, arising from this act of friendly imprudence, gave him some pain. He had sons, who in a few years would need to be settled in some business or profession—and the crippling of his power to place them where they might commence the battle of life with better chances of victory, was with him no small matter. The man who with the reasonable prospect of competence, laments over the loss of a little cash, must be selfish, and perhaps even miserly; but the man who deplores its loss, because it lessens his ability, moderately to aid those who are dear to him, cannot be regarded as deserving any severe censure. There are persons, it is true, who profess to believe that all Christians, and ministers in particular, should be utterly dead to all sublunary affairs—and should have so firm a faith in the care of Providence, as to be unmindful of the disappearance of any property with which they may have been entrusted; but such doctrine is downright secular Antinomianism—and taught, as it generally is, by those whose temporal wealth is as well assured to them as any earthly things can be—it affords another illustration of the superior facility of preaching to practice. Ministers are men—they are required to discharge the duties of the different relations they may happen to sustain, with exemplary faithfulness—and a darker stain than that of infidelity would rest upon them, were they to neglect, in ordinary times, to provide for their households—and they may therefore be par-

doned, if they should lament that any act of unreasonable generosity or trustfulness should have curtailed their ability to put their children in a position where they may, by industry, be comfortable. The consequences of imprudence, will be entailed on their families, just as they are on the families of others—nor will anything in their ministerial office shield them from the operation of those laws by which God governs human society. It is true, that the Almighty may wondrously bring good, out of disastrous events—but no man should therefore neglect due precaution against disaster. There is truth in the old proverb, that “God helps those who help themselves;” and there was wisdom and piety, as well as quaint expression, in Oliver Cromwell’s advice to his soldiers, on the eve of an engagement, “Trust in the Lord, and keep your powder dry!” Our readers must not understand these observations as applicable to cases where money is either given to the poor, or to the support of the cause of Christ—those come under a very different category—and often have very different results. To come back to the subject of our memoir—it is not impossible that the depression under which Mr. B. suffered, occasioned by pecuniary loss and domestic affliction; combined with the popular excitement to which we have before adverted, diminished the success of his labours in the Bury circuit. If Jesus Christ himself, full of truth and grace, could not do many mighty works in one place, because of the unbelief of the people, it cannot be matter of

surprise in the instance before us, that when the minds of both preacher and hearer were more or less unhinged — comparatively few spiritual wonders should have been wrought.

One of the houses in which he lived at Bury, adjoined the New Connexion chapel there—and the minister of that chapel cultivated his acquaintance with more than ordinary assiduity. It soon transpired that he was dissatisfied with his position—and was anxious to obtain admission into the ministry of the mother-church in Methodism. Mr. B. assisted him in his object, and at the ensuing Conference had the pleasure of seeing him accepted as a probationer in the Wesleyan ministry. This gentleman was the late Rev. John Strawé—who, by his Christian character, and his ministerial ability, secured the confidence and affection of the societies among whom he laboured, and who died at Sheffield, in 1841, in the midst of his days and usefulness. Those readers who may possess that somewhat scarce, but very excellent periodical, published during the Warrenite controversy, under the title of the “Wesleyan Illuminator,” will find a series of letters from his pen, signed, “Epsilon,” ably treating on some of the features of New Connexionism.

In 1826, Mr. B. removed to Colne. Here, in conjunction with the late Rev. James Hickson, he laboured for three years—and they were favoured with so much success, that notwithstanding the continued and deep depression of the trade of the dis-

trict; and the consequent poverty, and even want, of many of the people—the circuit was able, during the last year of his residence there, to support an additional minister. The unction of the Holy Ghost accompanied the word, and not a few were the slain of the Lord. Miserably poor, indeed, in the things of this world, were many of the new converts; but they became rich in faith, heirs of the glory of God. Some of them were often destitute of the necessaries of life—and their sunken cheeks, and emaciated forms, were pitiful to behold; and yet out of the depth of their poverty, “the riches of their liberality abounded” to the cause of the Redeemer. Mr. B. went much among them, comforting and relieving them to the utmost limit of his power; and while engaged in this labour of love, he was not only filled with gratitude to that God who had given him more than some others—but he also became acquainted with several instances in which the wants of the pious poor had been supplied, and their former Christian liberality requited, in so remarkable a manner, as to confirm his confidence in that Divine Providence which, especially in reference to Christ’s people,

“Watches every numbered hair,
And all their steps attends.”

One of these instances may be recorded, to the glory of God, and to strengthen the faith of Christians in similar circumstances. At Southfield, near Colne, there then lived a poor and pious woman, of the name of Grace Hartley. She was a widow, with

seven children—all of whom were dependent upon her industry. She had great difficulty in providing food and raiment for them, but in times of need was accustomed to lay her circumstances before her heavenly Father, in the prayer of faith, and some way of relief had always been opened to her. One night, in 1827, she was present at the annual Wesleyan Missionary meeting at Colne. All the money she had in the world was in her pocket, and consisted of a silver sixpence, and two penny pieces. She had previously determined to give the copper at the collection; and on her way home, to invest the silver in potatoes—which, with oatmeal, formed the staple food of the family. As she listened to the statements of the different speakers, about the moral misery of the heathen, she was deeply affected—and having experienced the saving power of the gospel herself, she resolved to do what she could to send it to those who were perishing for lack of its knowledge. When the collection was being made, remembering many signal instances of Divine care that had marked her history—she cast all her money into the treasury of the Lord. On returning home, she was tempted to suppose she had permitted her feelings to overcome her judgment—and she could hardly avoid glancing with apprehension at the morrow—but she lifted up her heart to God, and trusted he would provide.

The next morning it rained in torrents—and as she was beginning her household duties—a man, driving a cart, stopped at her door, and enquired if

Grace Hartley lived there. She answered in the affirmative: and he then said—"My mistress has sent you this load of potatoes." She assured him there must be some mistake, as she knew very little of the lady he mentioned—and certainly had never ordered the potatoes. He replied, "As to ordering them, I neither know nor care; but I know, that before daylight this morning, my mistress sent me with them to Grace Hartley, of Southfield—and I've brought them twelve miles, in weather fit for neither man nor horse—and leave them I shall!" He did so—and the case furnishes another example of the faithfulness of that God, who has said concerning the righteous—"bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure;" and of the rapid and ample repayment He often makes, for acts of devotion and liberality to that cause for which he gave his Son.

It is a cheering sign of the times, and augurs well for the future, both of the church and the world—that the obligation resting on Christians to give a proportion of their substance to works of piety and of mercy, is beginning to be better understood, and more widely acknowledged. Covetousness has been designated, by way of eminence, as *the* sin of the Christian church,—and its influence on the aggressive movements of that church, has doubtless often been as disastrous as the sin of Achan was to the assault of the men of Israel upon Ai. Any thing, consequently, which tends to expose that sin, and to introduce a better state of things, is for the advantage

of the world. Such, unquestionably, is the full discussion of the subject by means of essays and lectures. But whether people in humble circumstances are required to observe the same proportion in giving as those in affluence, is by no means clear. One class give of their poverty, and the other of their abundance. The man whose whole income will scarcely, with the utmost frugality, provide the necessaries of life for those who depend upon him, may surely contribute a smaller proportion than the man whose benefactions are taken out of luxuries, superfluities, or amassments. The Bible, however, plainly teaches, that the poor should be encouraged to give out of their poverty to the cause of Christ. And it also teaches, that everything given with a pure motive, and in the spirit of sacrifice, is precious in the sight of God—and that the more severe the sacrifice, the more highly it is esteemed by the Saviour. He did not tell the poor widow, who cast her two mites, even all her living, into the treasury, when he sat over against it—that her poverty was a bar to her charity—and a bar she could not with propriety remove; or that the insignificance of the amount of her donation rendered it of little value—but he encouraged all poor Christians to imitate her example, by commanding her, and by declaring that she had given more than all the rest. It is, however, to be lamented, that there are certain well-meaning officers in different churches, who are by no means sufficiently enlightened in this matter. They refuse to ask the free-will

offerings of the poor, for the Saviour himself. They decline to receive their contributions, on the ground that they ought not to express their love to the Redeemer in this way. They thus deprive the objects of their mistaken pity, of the greatest of the few luxuries possible to poverty—the luxury of showing that they value Christ more than food and raiment, and all other things. They go far towards chilling the hearts of the poor, by contracting them to the nutshell of their circumstances—towards debasing their minds, by denying them personal and practical identification with the grand schemes of human amelioration and happiness—and towards reducing them to the condition of ecclesiastical pauperism. Such officers of the church, actuated, we admit, by a blind benevolence, may well be asked—Is there not a miserable affectation in professing to be more merciful than the Saviour? Do you not love the poor more than you love Christ? Is not your spirit akin to that of the disciples, who, when a woman poured an alabaster box of very precious ointment on the Saviour's head, passionately remonstrated at the seeming waste—regarding it as so much taken from the poor—as though they deserved more than the Redeemer—and you do not equally merit the gentle rebuke those disciples received? By all means, we say, encourage the poor to give of their poverty—for their own sakes: that God may return them four-fold—for the sake of the kingdom of Christ: that more hearts may beat with warmer love—and gush

out in stronger prayer for it—and that new hands may be put to the ark, and fresh energies exerted for its advancement. Let those who sit over against the treasury, receive the gold and silver of the wealthy—but let them beware how they restrain the hands of the poor—and refuse, either out of pity or contempt, those two mites, trembling in the widow's fingers, lest they exclude from the treasury its richest gifts—and lest they rob the humble donors of that Divine repayment they shall receive who lend unto the Lord.

We may perhaps give consistency to these desultory remarks, by relating an anecdote. Many years before Mr. Beech was stationed at Colne, indeed in the days of Mr. Wesley—whose Journal shows that he often visited that town—there was a poor Methodist living in the neighbourhood, who was greatly troubled, because, when collections were made in the chapel, the plates were never presented to him—the people who carried them supposing him to have nothing to give. He considered himself deprived of one of his privileges, and determining to have redress, went to the fountain-head of Methodistic authority, and uttered his complaint to Mr. Wesley, adding, “Poor I am, and poor I may be, if I am never to be allowed to give.” A collection was made the next Sunday, and Mr. Wesley watched the collectors as they went round. He saw the poor man ready with his offering, but even the good Samaritan passed by on the other side. Mr. W. cried out, “Let that man give, it will do him good, and us good.” From

that time he enjoyed his privilege—he soon ceased to be poor—and before his death, had acquired considerable property. “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth.”

During Mr. Beech’s residence in Colne, he had a narrow escape. Returning from Manchester, the coach by which he was travelling was upset in the streets of Bury. It fell on his foot and ankle, and they were so seriously crushed as to cripple him for some time. Fortunately, he was carried into the house of his friend, Mr. Baker, where he received every attention, till he was able to be taken home. He always spoke of the kindness of that family with gratitude. This accident rendered it painful for him ever after to walk any considerable distance—it was the occasion of developing the love of horseflesh he afterwards exhibited—and he believed his subsequent habit of riding to his country appointments, greatly husbanded his strength, and prolonged his day of labour.

With his colleague, Mr. Hickson, he formed a friendship, which was only terminated by the death of that minister. Mr. H. had been for some years a missionary in Newfoundland. He was a calm, sober, solemn preacher, and a ripe Christian. He died in Lincoln, by fever, caught in visiting a sick person, who afterwards recovered.

By the Conference of 1829, Mr. B. was stationed at Selby, in Yorkshire. He was kindly received—met with many friends—laboured hard—and on the

whole his residence there was pleasant and profitable, both to himself and the people of his charge. Little has yet been said of his domestic character—but as there still exist letters to his eldest son, who had just been apprenticed at Knutsford, in Cheshire, a few extracts from them will serve to show, that as a father he was affectionate and judicious, and anxious to promote the spiritual and temporal interest of his children—while at the same time they will appropriately continue the narrative of his life.

“Selby, Sept. 18th, 1829.

“MY DEAR ROBERT—Your last gave us great pleasure. We could not but feel thankful that the Lord blesses you with strength to discharge your business duties. I earnestly hope this will be continued—and that above all we shall have to rejoice in hearing of your enjoyment of spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Be sure, my dear boy, to seek and secure that religion which will make you happy. Try to please God in all things, and then I am sure you will please those who love him, and especially those with whom you have to do.

“We are likely to be comfortable here. God has given me a favourable reception among the people. Some have been awakened, and have found peace, since we came, and an expectation of more extensive good is awakened. My earnest prayer is, that many may be brought to God during my sojourn. I have every comfort I need, and am provided with a good-looking, well-made, useful animal of a horse, for the country work. The aspect of the country presents a striking contrast to Colne and its neighbourhood. No extensive landscapes—no bold, romantic hills—all is flat, and wears an appearance of softness and tranquility. The prospect from my study windows consists of the tiles of sundry roofs, and above them a few poplars, lifting up their trembling heads. So much for prospects. The appearance, employment, and manners of the people, are as different from those

of the Colnites as the face of the country. We have not here the meagre countenances and emaciated frames of people half-starved—but the working folk are well fed and well clothed. We never hear the rattle of looms and shuttles—the men are employed in the fields, and the women at home.
* * * * * Be assured I think of, and pray for you, day by day."

"Selby, Jan. 9th, 1830.

"MY DEAR ROBERT—

* * * * *

We like our circuit well. The people are very kind, and treat me with great respect. Our congregations are large, and lately we have had a good work in several places. At Selby, we had ten brought in a fortnight ago—and we hope for better days. How are you getting on? I trust you will never forget you are the son of a Wesleyan minister—and that as your religious privileges have been great on that account, so are your responsibilities. I have known the hearts of some of my brethren filled with sorrow, by the improper behaviour of their sons—but I feel some confidence, that by the grace of God in you, I shall be spared that suffering. We often talk of you, and always remember you in our prayers. Whatever you do, get and keep right in the sight of God. Strive to please your employers. Secure a good knowledge of your business—for your future welfare and prosperity in the world will greatly depend on this. Be cautious in preparing medicines, or the lives of some of your fellow creatures may be lost. Take care of your health. And whatever you want in the way of money, always let us know—for we are assured of your carefulness—and we wish you to appear respectable. My letter is unnecessary, for I have just looked at your mother's—take her counsel, and my heart will rejoice in you."

"Selby, Sept. 9th, 1830.

"MY DEAR ROBERT—It always gives me pleasure either to hear from, or to write to you. You would receive the stations I sent from Conference. You wish to know how we all are. For myself, I thank God, I am in good health, and

though the work is rather heavier than in Colne or Bury, I am seldom weary. My greatest pleasure is to preach Christ to perishing sinners, and therefore my duty is my delight. Our chapel in the town is filled, and would be were it larger. I have been a good deal from home lately, on preaching excursions, for Missions, Schools, &c., and never was happier in my work, nor was I ever more desirous to see souls saved than I am now. Your mother suffers much—but suffers like a Christian; and is the same good wife and tender mother she always was, and just as much interested in the welfare of her family. John is at school, doing well, I hope; and Eliza grows apace, and is very dear to us. Mr. Pilter was here the other day, and spoke well of you. It gives me comfort to know you are pleasing your employer. You know enough of the world to be aware that in every situation there are trials, and you no doubt meet with some disagreeable things. I think you will go through them as well as most youths. I cannot divest myself of anxiety about your health. You are delicate, and I am afraid you suffer from weakness—do tell us how you are—and get medical help as soon as you feel ill. I am persuaded you do not forget the one thing needful. Let this be your motto—“I will acknowledge God in all my ways, and he shall direct my paths.” It would give me much sorrow if I thought you were careless about Christ and your soul. I should like to hear of you teaching in the Sunday School—distributing tracts, or something of that kind. Try to overcome your natural diffidence, and to do some good to those around you.

“As you are no longer under our eyes, be careful as to your choice of companions. Give most of your leisure to the improvement of your mind, by reading and thought. You used to have a thirst after knowledge—I hope it remains with you. Endeavour to excel in your business—your merit must be your chief recommendation in future life. God bless you and make you a blessing. Where our lot may be cast next year I know not—but I should like to be near you, if possible. I gave tickets yesterday to twenty new members. Let us hear soon from you. Your affectionate father.”

"Selby, Dec. 4th, 1830.

"MY DEAR ROBERT—I have heard of your welfare from Mrs. W., and I praise God that you are comfortable, and giving satisfaction. There is one thing I should like to hint to you, and that is, the silence you observe in your letters as to your religious experience. Perhaps a natural reserve on such points occasions it; but I think you know how much your father would rejoice to hear that the work of grace prospers in your soul—and that you begin to be more actively engaged for Christ in some way. You may plead youth—but young men should do something for their Saviour. If you were bold and forward, I should not write thus.

"Be diligent in your attendance on the means of grace, and punctual in the discharge of all your religious duties. You are now at a stage of life in which much prayer and watchfulness are needful to keep you safe; a single false step now, will injure you for life. I wish you to be comfortable and respectable in the world—and that depends on your mind and character—take care of them both. Your business will require diligence and study to master it—determine to let no difficulties discourage you. How do you like chemistry? Have you access to books on the science? Or can I help you in that respect? I part with no money with greater pleasure than that which goes to secure your future interest.

"Let your companions be higher than yourself in mind, attainments, and religion. Don't look down, but up. Cultivate a good address. That God may bless you, my dear boy, is the prayer of your affectionate father."

"Selby, April 2nd, 1831.

"MY DEAR ROBERT—You will be surprised and gratified to hear I have engaged to go to Northwich circuit next Conference. I wished to be near you, and as Providence has so ordered it, that I am invited to the circuit nearest Knutsford, I take it as a new manifestation of the loving kindness of my God. I have had other invitations, and one or two to better circuits—but on that point I never was ambitious. I had rather any time help at the improvement of a poor circuit, than at the spoiling of a good one. The friends here invited

me to remain—and I had almost made up my mind to do so—but I think it best for us to leave. * * * In all things towards my brethren especially, as to all others, I will behave honourably. And, Robert, let me tell you, one of my rules through life has been—*rather to suffer, than to cause to suffer*—let it be one of your's too.

“I hope you are serving the Lord with a willing mind. May He bless you, and make you happy, and keep you from evil.” * * * * *

These anticipated arrangements for the ensuing year were not destined to be carried out. The son, to whom the foregoing letters were addressed, arrived at home two months after the date of the last, far gone in consumption—and notwithstanding all that parental tenderness, and medical skill could do, he died on July 30th in that year. Mr. Beech, in prospect of his lingering longer, had been freed from his pledge to Northwich—and at the wish of the circuit was re-appointed to Selby. This bereavement was a heavy stroke to the family—for Robert S. Beech was a youth of rare promise. To a disposition remarkably docile and amiable—he united a mind of more than ordinary acuteness, ingenuity, and power. From his childhood he was distinguished for thoughtfulness, and an insatiable appetite for knowledge. Before he was twelve years of age, his acquaintance with several branches of natural philosophy, would have done credit to much older heads. He had a strong mechanical turn, and at that early age, constructed with a knife and a file, a wooden clock, which kept time admirably. He had a fine ear for music—and

though almost self taught, was no mean performer on several instruments. For some time he was backward in classics, and some other branches of scholastic education—in consequence of being kept at home by illness; yet in his last years at school he was the first boy. But above all, he feared God from his infancy—and was never known to tell a lie. He was reserved on religious topics—and though for years a member of the church, it was not till his last illness that he professed to enjoy a sense of the forgiveness of sin. In prospect of death, he exhibited the utmost composure—and spent his last days in comforting his parents—exhorting his brother to serve the Lord, and in reading several Commentaries, on those parts of the Book of Revelation, which treat on that New Jerusalem, of which he felt he was shortly to be an inhabitant. His latest utterance was, “Christ is precious!” Had it pleased God to spare his life, and had the lovely blossoms of mental and moral excellence he put forth been ripened into fruit, he would probably have been a distinguished man. But, by the appointment of Divine wisdom and goodness, his sun went down before it had reached its meridian. “Alas! my brother!”*

Soon after this bereavement, Mr. Beech and his family had reason to be thankful for an instance of God’s providential care over them. One night Mr. B. was awoke by the noise of something falling on

* See “Youths’ Instructer, vol. xvi., page 423, 1832, for a further account of R. S. Beech, by the Rev. James Hickson.

the floor of the room above him, and which was occupied by the servant maid. He got up to enquire the cause of the sound—and on opening his door found the staircase and passage full of smoke. He rushed to the upper story, and was horrified at discovering the curtains of the girl's bed consumed—its posts on fire—and portions of the carpentry of the chamber in flames—while the girl lay in a state of stupor. He took her out of danger—raised an alarm—the neighbours flocked to his assistance—and by great exertion the fire was extinguished before the arrival of the engines—but the house for some weeks was about as comfortable a dwelling as the arch of a crazy aqueduct. Of course, the accident had arisen from the servant having fallen asleep, leaving a lighted candle near the curtains. A revival of the essence of William the Conqueror's curfew regulation, would in some cases promote the safety of both life and property.

There are some people of so sordid a disposition, as to have an eye to worldly profit in all they do. To them the noble love to Christ, and his redeemed but perishing creatures, which constrains every true preacher of the cross, is altogether incomprehensible. They cannot believe that any man will pursue the vagrant course an itinerant ministry imposes, and be satisfied with food and raiment, and a comparatively small proportion of the comforts of life, and nothing more. They have a strong suspicion that such men are secretly adding house to house, and field to field—or at any rate, are feathering a nest of luxury in

which to repose in the evening of their days; or else, they have a firm faith in the reality of those imaginary funded millions, which rumour asserts, are to be divided among the members of the Conference at the advent of some impossible golden age. Now and then in their wanderings, Wesleyan ministers meet with persons who develope this faith. There was once a minister of the name of Waterhouse, whose table was adorned with seven young olive plants—and who happened, moreover, to have an ancient uncle, known in the country side where he lived as a “wise man.” This old gentleman, by dint of casting horoscopes—interpreting omens—discovering the geography of missing property, and other kindred pursuits—had succeeded in accumulating a fair share of this world’s goods. Knowing himself to be a trader in the credulity and superstition of others, he imagined his nephew was following the bent of the family genius, and was only an impostor of another class—and on one of the visits Mr. Waterhouse paid him, a conversation of this sort occurred. Uncle—“Well, John, I hope thou art making a pretty good thing out of this preaching?” Nephew—“I have no reason to complain, uncle.” U.—“I should think thou hast got a nice bit of property by this time, John?” N.—“Why, yes, uncle, I have done very fairly for the time.” U.—“I’m glad to hear it,—and what sort of property is it, John?” N.—“It’s all in houses, uncle.” U.—“And how many of them are there, John?” N.—“Seven,

uncle." U.—"And what sort of houses are they, John?" N.—"Very nice ones, uncle,—they're all WATER-houses!"

Mr. Beech had occasionally to cross the Ouse some miles above Selby, in a ferry-boat. He generally conversed familiarly with ferrymen, coachmen, toll-gate keepers, and persons of that class—and often endeavoured to turn their minds to spiritual things. The boatman in this case said to him, during one of their voyages—"I suppose you Methodist preachers are well to do people?" "Oh, yes!" was the answer, "we are, true enough." "Why, now, I should like to know," pursued the man, "how much you've made, since you began?" "I cannot tell, exactly," said Mr. B., "but I should not like to take twenty thousand pounds for what I'm worth." "Bless me!" exclaimed the man. "Yes," continued Mr. B., "I have the love of God, and a good title to a crown of glory, and a heavenly inheritance; and you may be rich in the same way, if you believe with a penitent heart on Christ."

When Mr. B.'s term at Selby had expired, the Conference of 1832 stationed him, in accordance with his own wish and provisional engagement, at Barnard Castle—and his friend, Mr. Hickson, was again his colleague.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

Mr. Beech's residence in Barnard Castle, was not characterized by any very remarkable events. The circuit was extensive and laborious—but he was favoured with sufficient strength to meet its demands. He manifested his usual energy and diligence, both in preaching the gospel and in his pastoral visits; but his efforts, diffused over so wide a surface, seemed to produce no great results. His ministry was not, however, without success—it was useful in the edification of believers, and also in the conversion of sinners. Several young people were among the fruits of his labours—some of whom are now connected with the noble army of Missionaries to the heathen. Here, too, the kindness of his disposition—his genial humour, and his general urbanity, made him friends—with some of whom he maintained a correspondence till his death—and who still remember him with affection. He left the circuit, if not greatly improved, at least, no worse than he found it; after having so-journed there for two years.

There are many reasons which may diminish or hinder the success of a Christian minister, at particular times and in particular localities. On the part of the minister himself, supposing him prominently to hold forth evangelical truth, and to insist on the cardinal doctrine of justification through faith in Christ—there may, nevertheless, be a want of adaptation between his style of teaching, and the precise

moral state, intellectual capacity, and taste of the bulk of his congregations—issuing in a lack of sympathy between preacher and people. Or, worse than all, there may be a diminution of his personal piety—or, at least, a pause in his heavenward journey—analogous to the sleep Bunyan's Pilgrim took, in the pleasant arbour built on the side of the hill Difficulty; a thing which never needs occur in any Christian's history—but which does generally occur, sooner or later, in the course of most Christians who travel many years through this wilderness; and which cannot take place in the case of ministers, without, for obvious reasons, exerting an unfavourable influence on the success of their public labours. On the side of the people, there may be a preoccupation of mind by worldliness—or a querulous and disputatious spirit—a want of union in feeling and effort—or a neglect of the great duty of prayer for the preachers of the cross—any of which, besides almost innumerable occasional obstacles thrown up by accidental circumstances, may, in spite of faithfulness on the part of ministers, prevent the word of the Lord having free course and being glorified. How far any of these things might operate, on one side or the other, during Mr. Beech's residence in Barnard Castle, it is impossible to say—but any season of comparative barrenness marking a ministry, generally powerful and successful, must have somewhere a sufficient cause.

There was a slight accident befell him while in this circuit, from which he learnt a lesson, and which

he regarded as a gentle rebuke of an error to which his temperament made him liable. His happy disposition led him to look at the bright side of everything, and to imagine good qualities where possibly they did not really exist. In the superior excellence of almost everything he possessed, (not including his personal attributes, for he had humble views of himself,) he was a firm believer. His wife and children, and his horse, especially when it was new; were, in his estimation, the best specimens of the kind the world could afford. He sometimes did not hesitate to express his belief on these points in a manner, which, though it might excite a smile at his simplicity, was nevertheless, an indication of a spirit so hopeful and sunny, that many more sober-judging people would be all the happier for sharing it. Occasionally, his buoyancy would impel him to a style of laudation not exactly in good taste. He was one day driving a brother minister, and beguiling the way by expatiating on the swiftness, surefootedness, and other excellencies of his Rosinante. He wound up his eulogium by exclaiming, "Indeed, Sir, if there be an animal which never partook of the consequences of Adam's fall, this is it!" Scarcely were the words uttered, when the horse went down as if shot—the shafts of the vehicle were broken, and the driver and his companion thrown into the road. Fortunately, neither were much hurt, but Mr. B. became more cautious in the use of approbatory superlatives—and

endeavoured to avoid even playful allusion to sacred subjects.

While at Barnard Castle, two ministers, having determined to call at every house in the parish, did him the honour of a pastoral visit. After some conversation on the moral state of the town—pleading haste, they rose to depart. Mr. B. exclaimed, “Gentlemen, you will be kind enough to pray with the family before you go.” They hesitated; but Mr. B. would take no denial, and falling down on his knees, they reluctantly imitated his example. But as they were without books, and unused to this kind of extemporaneous prayer—there was a long pause, during which each suggested that the other should begin. At length, the youngest of the two ventured, and prayed with freedom and feeling. When he finished, Mr. B. urged the other to commence. He did so, and his prayer was certainly remarkable. It was mainly composed of passages taken apparently hap-hazard from the Litany of the Church of England, but its principal peculiarity consisted in every successive petition, ending with the words, “for we are growing older and older every day.” Mr. B. concluded the meeting by heartily invoking the blessing of Heaven on his visitors and their labours. When he afterwards related this circumstance, it was easy to see by the twinkle of his eye that he secretly enjoyed the dilemma in which his unexpected request had placed his authorized pastors; and he used signi-

fificantly to observe, they never came to shepherd him again.*

He attended the Conference of 1834, which was held in London. It was an assembly of more than ordinary importance, for it adjudicated the case of Mr. J. R. Stephens—and decided, that to take a prominent part in Anti-State Church movements, is incompatible with the proper calling and work of a Wesleyan minister. It was at this Conference, too, that Dr. Warren threw down the apple of discord, in the shape of a speech opposing the establishment of an Institution for the better training of the coming ministers of the body—a speech, which, when published, was the occasion of disciplinary proceedings, which issued in the separation of Dr. Warren from Methodism, and in the formation of the Wesleyan Association. From Mr. B.'s notes of this Conference, it is plain, that his opinion coincided with that of the majority of his brethren on both these questions—and that he felt great anxiety for the peace of the Connexion. Indeed, on all ecclesiastical questions which have agitated the body in his time, he was unwavering in his adherence to what he believed to be Old Methodism, nor was his confidence in the judgment and integrity of those at the head of affairs ever shaken. He was in this, as in all other things, a Methodist preacher of the old school.

* We have some doubt as to the propriety of inserting this anecdote, and can only do it in a diluted form—but as our wish is to represent the subject of our memoir as he really was, it may go for as much, in the illustration of character, as it is worth.

He had to preach in one of the London chapels during this Conference. As he was on his way to fulfil this engagement, he was accosted by a young man, who misled by a resemblance in face and figure to another Wesleyan minister, addressed him as Mr. S—, and enquired if he were going to hear Mr. Beech preach? On being answered in the affirmative, the young man continued, “I know Mr. B. well; he was three years in the circuit I come from.” “Well, and what do you think of him?” “Why,” said the young man, “I think he is a good man, and a zealous, savoury, useful preacher.” “I cannot say I think of him as highly as you do,” said Mr. B., “I know him too, but I find that the more I know of him, the less I like him.” The youth to whom he was speaking was not one of those pliable persons who had rather agree to the most depreciating estimate of a friend’s character, than undertake the trouble of defending their own impressions; but on the contrary, he sturdily maintained his own opinion, and seemed to think the supposed Mr. S. had a strong inclination to backbiting. His error, as to identity, was only discovered on Mr. B.’s entrance into the pulpit.

“All’s well that ends well;” but it was quite possible Mr. B. might have had his inquisitiveness, as to the opinion entertained of him by others, punished. There were two very worthy ministers once stationed in a town in Lancashire. One was an elderly man, of good abilities and large information—but who did not always exert all the physical energy

in the pulpit, many of his hearers thought desirable. The other was young, ardent, fluent, with excellent lungs, and a fine voice, which he used so unmercifully, as to throw himself into a consumption, of which he died in the midst of his years. Of course, though not equal to his senior in the substance of his ministry, his manner rendered him vastly more popular. One evening, the old gentleman, on his way to preach at a country chapel, was overtaken by a lad, and he asked him "where he was going?" "I'm bound to chapel, to hear old —— preach," mentioning the name of his interrogator. "Is there not another preacher in the circuit?" was the next question, "Yoi," said the lad, "a fellee of t'h name of A—." "And which do the folks like best?" pursued the catechist. "Whoy," was the answer, "they loiken th' yung mon best a deal, they say th' oud mon con preach, but he's so desperate lazy." Mr. B. was more fortunate in his curiosity.

He knew how to take advantage of an opportunity of accomplishing an object, though he was aware the opportunity was afforded him by mistake. At this Conference, he wished to secure a particular minister to succeed him at Barnard Castle, because he believed it would be an eligible appointment for the circuit; but there were difficulties in the way, which he thought could only be removed by an interview with certain influential ministers, whose multiplied engagements made them chary of their time. One day, walking in the streets of London, a coach sud-

denly stopped beside him, and somebody cried out, evidently committing the mistake of the young man before mentioned, “S— S—, come here, and ride with us !” He turned towards the speaker, and saw in the carriage the very ministers he desired to interest in the appointment alluded to. He obeyed the summons, and they detected their error immediately. But he seized the opportunity—enjoyed his ride—stated his case—enlisted their help—and ultimately gained his end.

He removed at the close of this Conference to the place to which he had been invited—Birstal, in Yorkshire. It was a circuit extending over a very limited space, having in almost every village a good chapel, and a considerable congregation—and many of the people being distinguished by the true old Methodist spirit of happy, hearty, active piety. It was, therefore, on the whole, a comfortable, and indeed a desirable station. Mr. Beech’s colleagues, during the three years of his residence there, were the Revds. J. Bolam, Joseph Mortimer, and Hodgson Casson—the two former of whom are yet in active service—but the last has years ago gone to his eternal reward. He was a remarkable man, “full of faith and of the Holy Ghost”—and displayed great ingenuity in the selection of his modes of doing good—as well as no little general eccentricity. Of him, however, it is unnecessary to say much, as an excellent memoir of his life and labours has been given to the world by his friend, Mr. A. Steele. With these

colleagues Mr. B. laboured in harmony, and had to rejoice over a goodly number added to the Lord. For some months after his arrival at Birstal, he kept a diary, and it was continued till a tragic event in his family indisposed him to write his feelings, and indeed for some time filled him with anguish—but we shall cull from it a few passages, illustrative of his experience and labours.

“Jan. 1st, 1835. Held a watch-night at Gomersal last night. Not a very good time. This has been a day of severe temptation to me. This morning all was bright and calm in my soul—this evening all is cloudy and disturbed. How much I need to watch and pray to be kept right! May God make and keep me holy in heart and life!

“3rd. Band-meeting at Gomersal—the people spoke of being greatly blest under the sermon on the Watch-night. I was surprised, for I felt it a barren time.

“4th. Preached at Morley morning and afternoon, and at Churwell at night—and held a covenant service at both places. God was eminently present, and I am persuaded good was done. Glory to his name! Amen.

“7th. Heard a most impressive sermon from Mr. W. Dawson, at Birstal. At a prayer-meeting after, many seemed unwilling to yield to grace—but some were saved. Bro. Mortimer has a peculiar talent for usefulness in meetings of this kind.

“8th. Had a blessed season at Hightown—many

were in tears. May the Lord cause his word to conquer the stout-hearted sinner.

“ 13th. Praise the Lord for his preserving mercy ! Riding to Batley this morning, to visit some aged and sick members—I was almost knocked off my horse by the contents of a gun, carelessly fired by a young man, who did not take the trouble to see if any one were near. The shot did not perforate my hat—but it has made my head very painful. The young man followed me to beg pardon. I advised him to be more cautious in future—and prayed with him. He was much affected. May this circumstance issue in his conversion, and may my spared life show forth God’s praise !

“ 20th. Slept at Hightown last night—rose early this morning—and was greatly blest in overhearing my host, Mr. P—, engaged in prayer. I never before heard anybody so powerful in simple intercession—repeating a single petition many times with increasing fervour—and then uttering the language of praise as often. This is an excellent way in private—may I learn to imitate it !

“ 25th. A good day in God’s house. At Batley this evening—two souls professed to find peace. This will yet be a flourishing place.

“ 28th. A day of distress, on account of temptation. I am closely pursued by the adversary of my soul—but Christ gives me the victory !

“ Feb. 1st. Sunday. At Batley several professed to have been brought to God to day. I was exhausted with labour.

“ 3rd. Visited a number of our people at Batley, and found that much good had been done there on Sunday. May it be as the drops before the shower !

“ 5th. Baptized eight children at Churwell, and addressed the congregation on subjects suggested by the service, instead of preaching. They seemed interested, and I felt blest. Oh ! for the baptism of the Holy Ghost !

“ 8th. Sunday. A happy day to my own soul. Felt the presence of my Master both at Westgate Hill and Birkenshaw. I think good was done.

“ 12th. At Westgate Hill the power of God was present to heal. One who was convinced of sin was made happy to night.

“ 13th. Visited an old man aged eighty-eight, who has been a consistent member of the Wesleyan society more than seventy years. When this patriarch became a Methodist, the preachers in Birstal were Peter Jaco, Paul Greenwood, and John Atley ; and the circuit included Huddersfield, Halifax, Bradford, Dewsbury, and Cleckheaton. He says, that though he has held fast his confidence so many years—Satan has not given him up, but continues to assail him with temptations as difficult to be resisted as ever. He added, to use his own words,—‘ The devil came to me the other day, and said, Thou hast been thinking of heaven, and talking about it, and living for it, for more than seventy years—but after all, is there such a place ? Where is it ? and what is it ?’ I could not shake off this temptation for several days—and

was ready to think I had been following a fable and a shadow—and my joy left me, and my prospects became dim. But one morning a thought struck me, and I said to the devil—‘I know very little about heaven, only what the word of God tells me—and what foretaste of it I have had in my heart; but if I knew more about it than any man on earth, what would be the use of asking me? Thou knowest more than I can tell thee on that subject, for thou didst once live there thyself!’ The devil troubled him no more that day. He says, old Methodism is ‘Christ in you the hope of glory.’ May I be an old Methodist of that sort!”

This ancient Christian certainly manifested considerable shrewdness in his dealing with the Tempter. He proceeded on the *argumentum ad Diabolum* principle, and it was perfectly successful. There is, indeed, one method, simple but sure, by which all Satanic assaults may be overcome, and the tempter himself put to flight. Its formula and its result are contained in those words of Holy Writ—“RESIST the devil, and he will flee from you.” It is always and only want of resistance, that ensures his victory and our defeat. Subtle, powerful, and persevering as he is, Christian fortitude and opposition will conquer him. Beasts of prey, however savage and ravenous, are said to be unable to endure the steady stare of the human eye. It probably tames them, by flashing upon them the light of a mighter spirit than their own—mightier by all the superiority of reason

over instinct, and of moral agency over moral impotence,—and awed by the mysterious, and, perhaps, mesmeric power of that spirit's gaze through its bodily window—their ferocity subsides, and they steal away to the dark cover of their forests and caves. And so it is, to some extent, with that “roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” A face to face contest, if protracted by the Christian, will cow him, and cause him to creep off in shame. Every Christian is mightier by all the power of purity and faith than he,—and every mere seeker of moral excellence is stronger in his good desires—the fruit of the grace of God—and in his undoomed, probationary state, than a legion of devils. The believer's victory is secured by the resistance inspired by faith in Christ,—and he who in this spiritual conflict, determines to sell his life dearly, shall never lose it !

There are, however, various modes of resisting the devil, and triumphing over him openly. Our readers will recollect the ludicrous monkish legend of Dunstan, which represents that saint as seizing the nasal promontory of the enemy of souls with a pair of red hot pincers, and so subduing him. It would be mere trifling to touch on this and similar fables further than to remark, that their moral agrees with the Scripture doctrine, that courageous opposition will overcome Satan. There is, too, a possibility of taking a holy revenge on him, by going a step farther in the right way than we should have done, had he left us

to carry out our original intentions in peace. This is bringing good out of evil—and by a heavenly alchemy transmuting temptation into blessing. We remember somewhere hearing of a Christian man, whose case may illustrate our meaning. He was at a Missionary meeting, and intended to contribute a shilling—though he was so poor that such a sum was a matter of importance to him. As he sat and listened, it struck him that sixpence was enough for him to give. He rejected the thought, and ascribing it to the suggestion of the Wicked One, said, “Satan! I’ll be revenged on thee!” When the boxes were handed round, he threw in two shillings, instead of sixpence, and cried out with vehemence, “There! did I not say I would be revenged on thee?” But to proceed with our extracts from Mr. B.’s diary:—

“19th. My dear little daughter is recovering rapidly—praise the Lord! I feel thankful, and am happy in my soul!

“26th. One soul was saved last night at Morley, and another this morning. For some weeks past I have lived on the mountain-top, rejoicing in God my Saviour—and have been greatly blest in my soul. Glory! Glory be to my Redeemer!”

The diary from which these passages are taken contains but another entry—but before transcribing it we may observe, that as in the history of Jesus Christ—the awful scene of the temptation in the wilderness occurred immediately after the magnificent spectacle of the baptism in Jordan—and the fierce

clamour for his blood directly followed the popular song of “Hosanna to the Son of David”—so in the history of Christ’s disciples, extraordinary manifestations of divine love are often succeeded by severe trial. Mr. Beech’s soul had been prospering, and his labours were successful—but the strength of his faith and love was now to be tested. These are the last words of this record :—

“27th. “Out of the deeps I cry unto thee, O Lord! My dear and only daughter *is dead*. This afternoon she was better, and sweetly singing, but in a few minutes she was gone to a brighter world. Lord help me and mine!”

The death of this only daughter wrung his heart, and threw a cloud over his mind and his house, which remained for months. She was a child of great loveliness, both of appearance and disposition; and her unexpected and sudden end, occasioned apparently by medical treatment, which certainly was not justified in the result, made the blow hard to bear. But while his lacerated affections quivered with anguish—his faith led him to endeavour to say, “Thy will be done.” He had divine comfort and support, and much sympathy from friends in different places—but it was long ere his spirits recovered their former tone. Many years after, in a letter to his son, he refers to this, and previous bereavements, in the following affecting and pious language :—“I frequently think of your late amiable brother Robert, of your lovely and affectionate sister Eliza, and of your little,

sprightly, innocent brother George. My heart has felt unutterable grief in their death. There are so many touching recollections associated with them, that were I to give way, I could weep for hours together—but this will not do. ‘They are not lost, but gone before.’ ”

“In a milder clime they dwell,
Region of eternal day.”

These words show that he was neither a stone nor a stoic. His heart was warm—his affections strong—and the chief sorrows of his life, arising as they did from successive bereavements, he never attempted to conceal. Indeed, there was a transparency about him which rendered concealment almost impossible. And it was so much the better for him. The very vividness and openness of his griefs brought alleviation in the act of expressing them, and in the amount of sympathy they awakened. Happy they, who, like him, have no sorrow, the cause of which cannot easily be told to others, and which only strong faith in the perfection of God’s government, and the constancy of Christ’s love, can render durable !

Before dismissing these partly domestic matters, it may not be inappropriate to give some extracts from letters, addressed about this time to his son, who had begun to preach, and had arrived at a conviction that he was divinely called to the work of the ministry. Mr. B. rejoiced over this, and as the business in which this son was engaged, allowed little time for theological study, and general mental im-

provement, he had entertained the idea of buying him off from the remainder of his apprenticeship, that he might have better opportunities of cultivating pursuits congenial to his convictions. This idea was afterwards abandoned, and it is only mentioned in explanation of allusions that will be found in this part of his correspondence.

"Birstal, Dec. 1st, 1835.

"**MY DEAR SON**—I have written to the parties concerned, stating, that several friends have intimated to me that it seemed desirable that you should now devote your time to preparation for the great work of the ministry; and that I was anxious to enter into any arrangement, which, without prejudicing others, should tend to your welfare and the glory of God. From the answer, I am inclined to think, it may be best for you to finish your engagement at Knutsford, and move on as the Lord may open your way. I am glad to find you passive in the matter. Still steadily advance,—increasing your personal piety—attending properly to your business, reading, thinking, praying, and preaching for souls—and doing all with eternity in view.

"I have ordered some books for you, which I hope will do you good. I trust you will pay attention to the *manner* and *style*, as well as the matter of your preaching. You are favoured with good living examples. I wish I had given more heed to these things. I assure you I am much dissatisfied with myself, and often wonder how the people bear with me as they do. Cultivate a lively, energetic manner; and in order to this, get your own soul imbued with love to God and man. That, with the unction of the Holy Ghost, will make you both earnest and successful.

"I thank God I find my work is truly my pleasure. I am strong to labour. Whether I shall remain here a third year I can hardly tell. Many things are agreeable—others would incline me to remove. We are not getting many out of the rock of late—yet the last time I was at Batley, God gave me

four, and the good work is reviving in the society. But I have some trouble in the management of some circuit affairs. When one or two people get wrong, it is hardly possible to enforce discipline without giving offence—but I believe that to administer it in a gentle and loving spirit, and in the fear of God, is most likely to do good. This I strive to do.

* * * *

“Birstal, June 1st, 1836.

“MY DEAR SON—Your apprenticeship will expire in a few months—be faithful to your duties to the last.

“I should like you very much to be at home, after your time is up, till next Conference—but were that the case, it would involve my proposing you, as a candidate for our ministry, at the March Quarterly Meeting of this circuit; and besides that, I should have to prepare a written character of you, to be sent to Conference, signed with my name—and my judgment tells me, a father should never, except in cases of absolute necessity, do either of these things for a son—his paternal affection may blind him—or if really not partial, the suspicion of it on the part of others, may do the son damage.”* * * *

“Birstal, June 19, 1837.

“MY DEAR SON—

* * * *

You have now been some months engaged in the honourable work of preaching the Gospel. Live near to God, and give yourself to reading, study, and prayer. You must not rest satisfied without souls being saved. Mr. Wesley’s three marks of a divine call to the work of the ministry, should not be lost sight of in these days of refinement and scientific sermonizing—*gifts, grace, and fruit*; remember the last. Some seem to think all the fruit necessary is that people should be comforted and edified—but I do not—for if so, who are to be the instruments in the hand of God in the conversion of sinners? I hope you will have many seals of your ministry, who will

* This passage is inserted merely as an illustration of the good judgment and honourable feeling of Mr. B., on a point where natural affection might have rendered weakness venial, and error pardonable.

be the crown of your rejoicing in the day of the Lord. Remember what the lads at Woodhouse Grove wrote in the pulpit, as a hint to their preachers—‘Short and lively.’ On week-nights, be brief, and call sometimes on one or two to pray after the sermon—praying yourself at the last. This will help the people to more life. On Sabbath evenings, a prayer meeting after preaching is a good time to secure for Christ and Methodism, those who may have been wounded by the two-edged sword.

“We have had a little excitement here, which has led me to publish a tract. If you could peruse the notorious Gathercole’s ‘Churchman,’ for this month, you would see it was time to interfere. If this tract does not quiet the young clergyman, I must write another, I suppose. I hope in all things you will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.” * * *

The excitement mentioned in the above letter soon subsided. It was occasioned by a zealous local preacher, telling the Wesleyan congregation at B—, that at a prayer meeting, held after a sermon preached by the Rev. John MacLean, of Sheffield, a vicar of the Established Church professed to have obtained peace with God. This was bruited about the village, and like the story of the three black crows, assumed different shapes, and lost nothing on its travels, till it came to the ears of the resident clergyman, in the guise of tidings that the Vicar of Sheffield had been at a Methodist penitent form, and there found salvation. This horrible news alarmed the clergyman, and led him to imagine that, if true, the church was in danger—but in a while, incredulity got the better of fear—and he wrote to the supposed convert, enquiring whether the rumour were well founded. On receiving a denial of its correctness, he supposed he

had a handle against the Methodists—and in an article in the periodical edited by Gathercole, represented their preachers as deceivers of the people, going about imposing on them by falsehoods, &c. B—— was plentifully supplied with that number of “The Churchman” in which this attack was made—and the case looked black enough. Mr. Beech wrote the clergyman, offering to give him the name and address of a minister of the Established Church, having a cure of souls, who was converted at such a meeting, and after a sermon by Mr. MacLean. This offer was accepted, and the address furnished—but still the gentleman professed to adhere to his original impression, that the whole statement was a fabrication—and part of his correspondence with Mr. B. was scarcely marked by common civility, much less by scholarly or Christian courtesy. Mr. B. published the letters, with observations on the case; and he succeeded in removing, to a great extent, the unfavourable impression which had been produced in the neighbourhood. It would answer no good purpose to re-publish the tract—but an extract from his concluding letter, may serve to show the manner in which he could administer reproof, when he deemed it necessary:—

“ You must permit me, Sir, to say, that in this business you have manifested a lack of two graces, which most ornament the ministerial character—viz., prudence and charity. Prudence would have led you to have allowed the possibility of mistake, both on the part of the local preacher, and of the person who

gave you a misrepresentation of what was said. I presume you yourself are liable to error, and you might have concluded your friend, the informant, was so too. And then, I think, if you had read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested the 13th chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians—before denouncing us as deceivers, you would have waited on the ministers of the circuit; or at least you would have written one of them. But I fear, this prudent and charitable conduct, would not have been in accordance with those strong feelings of dislike you evidently cherish towards the Methodists—a people who, let me say, have been instrumental in promoting the revival and extension of true religion—and who have never sanctioned those attacks on the Establishment which have been, and yet will be made—and who, for reasons I could mention, you have cause to respect and love. Thank God, all your brethren do not look on us with an angry and jealous eye—but some can appreciate us, and solicit our co-operation in the blessed work of doing good. I pray you may yet come to a better mind, and be the instrument of the sound conversion of those to whom you minister."

There are some men of narrow views and contracted hearts, who cannot rejoice with all their souls in good done by others. If their neighbour's field should happen to be greener, or his garner better filled than their own—they are instantly gnawed by something akin to jealousy, envy, and covetousness.

They chafe, too, at the popularity and usefulness of their own brethren—and can scarcely refrain from using, in reference to them, the language of detraction. Nothing of this kind belonged to Mr. B. As before stated, one of his colleagues was the late Rev. Hodgson Casson, who, though then shattered both in body and mind—yet from the fame of his former extraordinary usefulness, and of his still frequently developed eccentricity, attracted considerable attention, and commanded large congregations. Mr. B. could scarcely be unaware, that in the substance, arrangement, force, point, and raciness of his own sermons—in short, in everything but quaintness and oddity, he was not a whit inferior to Mr. Casson—but the greater popularity of that minister never gave him a moment's uneasiness. So far from that, he rejoiced in it, and promoted it as much as lay in his power. He honoured Mr. C. for his piety and usefulness—and manifested towards him a disinterested, and even a sacrificing affection—sometimes devoting his leisure evenings to relieve Mr. C. of labour, to which his failing strength was occasionally unequal. It is pleasing to find this kindness was felt and acknowledged—for in a letter from Mr. Casson to Mr. Steele, which is inserted in the latter gentleman's memoir of Mr. C., there occurs the following passage: “I need say nothing about Brother Beech. You know him equally as well as myself: only this I'll say, I have found him an agreeable colleague—he has often been of use to me—could rejoice when good

was done by others—and has had patience to bear with my infirmities all the year. I should like it very well, if a gracious Providence should cast our lot together in some place at a future day."

We are tempted to make another digression, and to say, that our personal recollections of Mr. Casson are distinct and somewhat amusing. He was, unquestionably, of an eminently devout spirit—for his love of prayer was manifest to all who frequented his society. But he was also saturated with a sly and comic humour—and this mingling, or rather combining, with his devoutness, (incompatible as the two may appear at first sight) sometimes produced a strange and startling result. We remember meeting him, with other company, at a friend's house; and on sitting down to dinner, about an hour and a half after the time at which it had been expected, he was requested to ask a blessing. Whether the delay had sharpened his appetite, and exhausted his patience—whether he wished to administer a rebuke for want of punctuality in the cook—or whether he had perceived among the guests any symptoms of hunger—and of the slight asperity of manner hunger sometimes occasions—it was impossible to determine—but he rose, and solemnly uttered these words—"Bless the Lord! better late than never! Sanctify this provision to our use—may we eat and drink and be good humoured—and may none of us eat too much, for Christ's sake! Amen." The host laughed—the hostess blushed—the visitors smiled, and cast significant

glances at each other—but he remained perfectly undisturbed, and apparently unconscious of anything ludicrous in his style of saying grace. In accordance with this anecdote, is a statement in his biography—that he once closed a prayer, preliminary to the business of a Missionary meeting, with the petition, that “every heart might be filled, and every pocket emptied.”

There are many persons who will, doubtless, find it difficult to reconcile this mode of expression with their idea of a deeply religious man. Not a few, possibly, in their severe propriety, will scarcely hesitate to account the individual who employs it, as little better than a “heathen man and a publican.” But it should be remembered, that Mr. Casson was a singular character—a sort of irregular production—and modes of expression, which in most others would be disgusting affectation, in him were simply spontaneous and characteristic. It may be affirmed, with tolerable certainty, that God has not made all men precisely alike. While certain grand features of mental and moral conformation, so to speak, are found in all, and prove their humanity—the prominence, turn, and consequent *ensemble* of the mental features, are as infinitely diversified as the expression of the human countenance. Now, though religion renews and sanctifies faculties already existing; and though it implants principles, awakens emotions, and confers powers, hitherto absent, unfelt, or but partly developed—yet it does not annihilate original mental

constitution or temperament. The result is, that men undoubtedly possessing much religion, are not more exactly alike, than are men in their unrenewed condition. Grace may be exhibited in their spirit and conduct, but the impression produced on the observer by each individual, may be slightly different, just as rays of the same light, passing through a window of stained glass, will convey an impression to the optic power, differing according to the hue of the medium through which they shine. Our object, however, in making these remarks, is not to defend either assumed singularity, or unseasonable humour—but only to urge, that true and even eminent piety, may exist in conjunction with attributes, which produce, in critical eyes, all the effect of a blemish—and which sometimes lead good Christians to conclude, that the absence of the “mint, anise, and cummin,” of refined taste and perfect propriety, may be accepted as decisive evidence of the lack of those “weightier matters,” which form the staple of true and deep religion. As astronomy recognises stars of different magnitudes and varied lustre, and comets of strange appearance and eccentric orbit—so Christian philosophy will hold it possible, that men may be entirely devoted to God, who, neither wear their phylacteries in the prevailing fashion—nor pronounce their Shibboleth with orthographical accuracy.

But to resume—Mr. Beech, on his visits to Isaac Crowther, Esq., of Morley, near Birstal, often conversed with that benevolent gentleman about the

Wesleyan Missions. Mr. C. expressed himself as convinced, that the liberality of the church was not keeping pace with the openings of Providence in the heathen world—and he further went on to say, he had not done his duty—and in evidence of his determination to amend, he placed £1000 in Mr. B.'s hands, to be transmitted to the Mission House in London. This munificent contribution was but the forerunner of other similar ones. To his latest days Mr. B. was accustomed, frequently to refer with pleasure, to the astonishment and devout joy which filled his heart, at this manifestation of the grace of God, in one of his flock.

At the Conference of 1837, Mr. Beech's three years at Birstal were fulfilled, and he was appointed to Carlisle. To this arrangement he felt some reluctance at first—because he had accepted an invitation to a circuit in another direction—and because Carlisle was one of the few places in which Methodism had been almost devastated by the secession occasioned by Dr. Warren. He was, however, selected as a likely man to build up the waste places of that station—the Conference also honouring him with the responsible office of Chairman of the District. He arrived at Carlisle on the 25th August, after having been greatly refreshed by an interview with his friends at Barnard Castle, with whom he spent some days, and among whom he preached with such divine power, that several souls were added to the Lord. He saw much to discourage him in his new circuit, but

he cheerfully set to his proper work of saving souls, and cherished hope of immediate success. In a letter written about a fortnight after his arrival, he thus expresses himself:—

“I greatly enjoyed the journey from Barnard Castle to this city. The scenery in this country is charming, and has all the variety desirable, and almost possible. Mountains, bordering on the sublime—rural valleys—rich meadows—thick woods, and sufficient water in the shape of streams, with one good river. When we reached this place, however, we saw we had made a change indeed. The society is only a remnant. But we are *booked* for one year at any rate, and I am determined to do all I can to raise the circuit, and bring blessing on the people. They are very affectionate—but there are few of them to be so. Think of a city with twenty thousand souls, and only ninety-nine members of our society. The house is not convenient—but my study is as near heaven as it well can be—and from its lofty window I can see the river Eden, and a fine bridge over it—and farther on, some of the hills and mountains of Scotland. About six or seven miles that way, is Gretna Green, where a blacksmith has married in haste many a foolish couple, who have repented at leisure. On the Sunday after we came, at seven in the morning, I walked up the street, and went into the chapel, and found six or seven persons at a prayer meeting. They prayed long and without life. At half-past nine, we had a class-meeting in the house. I preached at half-past ten, and felt much at seeing so good a chapel, with so miserable a congregation. At two, I went to chapel again, expecting to hear a local preacher—but as he did not come, I gave an exhortation, and afterwards met my class. At six, I preached again, to what our people call a large congregation. I felt happy, and we had a tolerable prayer-meeting afterwards. On Monday, I preached in the same place, and held a leaders’ meeting. It is with us the day of small things—but the expectations of the people are raised, and so are mine. I have no doubt, with God’s blessing, we shall advance. Every

night since Monday, I have been working in the country, and I am informed, that on Friday night a man was so powerfully impressed under the sermon, that he was heard crying loudly for mercy in a field. Hallelujah!

“ Well, all is right—my soul is happy—I never was more at home, and I doubt not I shall see good done.”

These anticipations were soon realized. His path had been directed by the Lord, and God had blessed his efforts, as will be apparent from the following letter addressed to a friend, towards the close of his first year at Carlisle :—

“ *Carlisle, June, 1838.*

“ **MY DEAR SIR**—You will remember I manifested, for a season in the Conference, some unwillingness to come to this city. It was not because I was afraid of hard work, but because my judgment, my inclination, my interest, and my previous engagement, pointed another way. But from the moment I fell in with the wish of the Conference, I have not had an uncomfortable thought or feeling on the subject. I came in the name of the Lord, in that name have I trusted, and have been helped.

“ When at a distance, I first saw the tall chimneys of Carlisle, my heart was full of love and prayer, and I said, ‘ O Lord, give me favour in the sight of the people, and double the number of members while I sojourn yonder!’ My first Sabbath’s morning congregation caused me to weep in my closet—when I called to mind the crowded assemblies in the Birstal circuit. The prayer-meetings were dull and cold. Instead of all the people saying Amen! there were but two or three who uttered that word, and they half stifled it. I resolved, by God’s grace, to try if preaching earnestly the great truths of the Gospel, would not better this state of things. I carried out my resolution,—my whole soul was in my work—my work was my delight—and I seemed to myself to be made anew. I prevailed on those who took the lead in the prayer meetings, to pray short, and to give us reason to

say, Amen! by asking for something. They soon began to pray most powerfully, so that we felt the presence of God was in the midst of us.

“The congregations soon increased, and the almost deserted pews in the gallery were filled with attentive hearers. Our prayer-meetings after preaching on a Sunday evening are well attended, numbering frequently not fewer than two hundred people. I found in Carlisle ninety-nine members—now we have more than one hundred and sixty. Peace and prosperity are among us. Our leaders’ and other meetings of the kind, are what a Methodist preacher would wish them to be. Our singing was not much to boast of, but we have made our devotional music better by the introduction of an organ. To God be all the praise for our general improvement!

“Our friends wish me to remain a second year, and I have no objection; though my income is much less than it has been for years back—but ever since I became a travelling preacher, it has been with me as with the Israelites and their manna: when I have gathered much, I have had nothing over; and when I have gathered little I have had no lack.” * * * *

We shall only add to this letter, that the reader who does not discover character in it, cannot be particularly sagacious.

Mr. B.’s second year at Carlisle passed away, on the whole, as pleasantly and usefully as his first. Early in that year he had made up his mind, for several reasons, not to prolong his stay beyond the ensuing Conference—and he accepted an invitation to Beverley, which came with a number of others. He felt and gave pain by this decision. The Carlisle Wesleyans were attached to him—not a few of them regarded him as their father in the Gospel, and the

thought of his voluntary departure grieved them. He had never complained of labour or inconvenience, for he knew their love, their liberality, and their faithfulness to Methodism. But his usually strong health had been interrupted by a serious illness—and he was of opinion, that having done all he was able for the circuit during two years—another might, more efficiently, advance the interests of the society there. He left his Carlisle friends with regret, and he ever after cherished for them a warm affection. The pleasure of the Lord had prospered in his hand—a division of the circuit had been effected—additional ministerial help had been obtained on the same ground—and the prospects of Methodism in that city were brighter than they had been for years.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

The ancient and pleasant town of Beverley, in Yorkshire, was Mr. B.'s next residence. His colleagues, at one time or other of his stay there, were the Revds. J. Priestley, W. G. Duncan and T. M. Fitzgerald. Few remarkable occurrences marked his sojourn in Beverley, but he pursued his course in an almost unbroken monotony of sacred and happy toil. He was diligent in preaching the word—visiting the people—endeavouring to improve the young men of the society and congregation—and in tending the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him over-

seer. His labours were instrumental in promoting both the edification of believers and the conversion of sinners.

But though his course was monotonous as to the duties he performed—it may be here said, that he had his own mode of preaching and conducting religious services generally.

He had little sympathy with those who maintain that all should work after one model. He often broke out of the common way of discharging duty, and followed his own inclination, believing that variety in this respect was useful. A few words of a letter he wrote at this time to his son, will show his opinion, and point out his frequent practice. “Strive to help on the great work of saving souls. If you were to turn out of your ordinary way to win some souls, God would bless you. Constant regularity in the mode of conducting services often becomes formalism, and formalism is a powerless thing. Lord Nelson won his victories by breaking through the common line of naval warfare. Do, now and then, a singular, but at the same time a sensible thing—not an unreasonable, foolish, or degrading thing.” He did so himself sometimes, and did good by it. He would occasionally pause in giving out hymns to impress the sentiment of some line by pertinent and powerful words—and sometimes, he would give on a week night an exhortation, that would be more impressive than an elaborate sermon. Not unfrequently, he would call on some men who had power in prayer,

to harrow in the good seed he had been sowing, before pronouncing the benediction. Mere eccentricity is to be avoided—but an unvaried adherence to routine has its disadvantages.

His whole soul was as much in his work at this, as at any other time in his long career. His mind was actively engaged in increasing his biblical knowledge, and in the preparation of new sermons. Though he had now passed his fiftieth year—and had arrived at an age when there is often a strong temptation to cultivate the easy-chair, mentally as well as physically, and to repose on the professional accumulations of former years, he resisted the temptation, if he ever felt it. His ministry, consequently, retained its original freshness and power. It must be admitted that the repetition, through a long series of years, of precisely the same thoughts and modes of expression, will impart a musty flavour to discourses, otherwise excellent. The mind is something like the body in demanding exercise to preserve its health, and to develope its powers. The reason why many sermons, good in substance, are flat and vapid is, doubtless, because the preacher is so familiarized with every nook of his essays, that he can deliver them mechanically, without the thoughts filling his mind, or kindling much emotion in his heart. The most beautiful landscape will lose something of its attraction by being everlastingly beneath the eye. The finest strain of music will pall the ear by an eternal repetition. So it is in the realms of thought and feeling. The

mind of the minister who is always depending on former gains, is like a sword rusting in its scabbard—its brilliance, its edge, and its effectiveness, are gradually departing. How important then to keep the mind constantly employed! Mr. Beech did so at this time, for in a letter under date of July 14th, 1841, he says,

“I am happy in my work, because I love it. I have as much pleasure in striking out new plans of sermons as I ever had. Last Sunday I had two new ones, and last night I preached for the first time on these words—‘Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.’ I endeavoured to shew—

I. In what Christian people should go forward?

1. In the pursuit of Christian knowledge.
2. In the exhibition of Christian graces.
3. In the performance of Christian duties.
4. In the attainment of Christian privileges.

II. Why they should go forward?

1. Because God commands it.
2. Because the claims of Christ on us require it.
3. Because the maintenance of Christian character demands it.
4. Because without it we cannot escape hell, and reach the crown of glory laid up for us.

“Then I applied the subject, and told the sinner what would be the consequence, if he went forward. I keep striving to pluck poor souls as brands from the eternal fire, and to quench them in the Saviour’s blood.”

As we have stated, his soul was in his work; so we may now say, his warm feeling influenced his delivery, and made it always lively and energetic. He never spared the sweat of his brow in preaching the Gospel. He was not one of those who never for-

get themselves in the pulpit, and whose emotions are always, either so feeble, or so thoroughly bitted and curbed, as to render them models of propriety. He had no conventicle twang—no measured tones—no ready-made pathos—no studied gestures. His delivery was sometimes more energetic than agreeable, and it never was particularly graceful. But then it was natural and often powerful. It was generally the expression of vivid emotion. And to the end of his life it never lost, but rather gained in animation. In this respect he was, as Robert Hall said of himself, “like touchwood, the more decayed, the more easily fired.” At Beverley, for a week or two, he was laid aside by a singular sensation of numbness in one arm, and down one side—apparently betokening incipient paralysis, but which never afterwards troubled him. He would recommence his work before his friends thought it prudent. He thus alludes to this venture:—“At night my strength failed me before I had done—but I believe I did not economize it, and I was blamed at home for my pains. But I would rather people complained of my earnest and zealous preaching—yea, though I were to half kill the body, than that they should have to say, I dealt in the most important truths in a cold and careless manner. I was preaching on the gain of the world—the loss of the soul, and what a human spirit in hell would give to have the matter changed, and how could I be aught but earnest? It would have been a sin to have been calm.”

The truth is, he always was earnest in the pulpit, and sometimes loud. This was the result partly of his temperament—partly of his deep impressions of religious truth, and partly also, of the force of the examples placed before him in early life. He came from a country of warm hearts and good voices. In that part of Staffordshire, there may still occasionally be heard a shout of rejoicing in the sanctuary. In some of the villages, almost all the people can yet say Amen—and now and then, can employ less time-hallowed expressions of sympathy with the sentiments uttered in prayer and preaching. In olden times, they were almost indecorously vivacious in public worship. At one place, not far from Chesterton, and in the Burslem circuit, about the time Mr. B. was converted, the people were so lively as sometimes to render it difficult for the preachers to proceed. A young minister, calm, sober, and intellectual, then stationed in that circuit, was scandalized at their vociferousness, and lectured them roundly upon it. As he did not produce much effect, he announced that he would deliver a sermon on right behaviour in the worship of God. The time came—the people assembled—and for once, during the prayer preliminary to the discourse—a profound silence prevailed. The text was read, “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” A man, who had recently been converted, after a notoriously wicked life, could restrain himself no longer, but cried out, “Bless the Lord! I know he

is the author of peace—for he has spoken peace to my soul !” Others joined with him, and the poor preacher was discomfited. No doubt he was right, and the people were wrong to some extent—for while hearty responses are good things—mere vociferousness is to be deprecated. Noise in the worship of God should have sense, and heart, and holy influence in it—and not be like sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. But it is not surprising, that the lively, energetic manner of those by whom Mr. B. was surrounded in early life, should have had some influence on the formation of his own energetic style of delivery.

In 1842, Mr. Beech removed to Tadcaster, where he remained for three years, and laboured with acceptance and success. His colleagues were the Revds. T. D. Baines and John Gregory, and their association was in every way agreeable. Between them there were confidence, harmony and love. He had accepted an invitation to Tadcaster with much hesitation, arising from humble views of himself. In a letter to the Stewards of the circuit, he said—

“I regard the superintendency of Tadcaster as a highly important charge, and one involving great responsibility. That circuit has for the last three years been greatly favoured by the residence in it of the venerable Joseph Entwistle, whose amiable spirit—apostolic meekness—untiring zeal, and invaluable ministry, must have exerted a beneficial influence on every department of the work among you—and together with the many excellencies of his highly esteemed son, who is now stationed at Tadcaster, must, under God, have improved the intelligence, piety, and Christian activity of your people—so that whoever may follow them, will be in a situa-

tion as difficult as responsible, and can scarcely hope to make up to the people the loss they will have sustained. These things make me tremble at the idea of succeeding men of such eminent worth, and I do think, you would do better to turn your attention to some minister whose talents are superior to mine, and who may more satisfactorily fill the gap that next Conference will make."

It may be seen from this letter, that he obeyed the apostolic precept to esteem other better than himself—and that he scarcely held the comfortable creed of his friend, Mr. Garrett, who used to say, that "he was good enough for any circuit, and any circuit was good enough for him;" or of the old Methodist lady, who, when one of her ministers came to take leave of her, previous to his removal, comforted herself and him by declaring that, "there never was a preacher left the circuit, but a better came in his place!"

Mr. Beech had not been long in Tadcaster before he learned that the Steward of a Baronet in the neighbourhood had given notice to quit to a tenant, solely on account his having opened his house for prayer-meetings by the Wesleyans. With his usual spirit and promptitude, Mr. B. at once wrote the following letter:—

" Dec. 31, 1842.

" Permit me, Sir — to state a circumstance connected with one of your tenants of the name of —. I am informed your steward has waited on him with a notice to quit his farm, alleging the sole reason of such notice to be, his having permitted meetings for prayer to be held in his house.

" I cannot believe you, Sir —, will sanction this—as it is not in accordance with the liberality and charity you have always manifested. You have had many opportunities of

witnessing the development of religious principle in many who have attended such meetings during the last seventeen years in —, and I believe you are able to appreciate the ordinary influence of such meetings better than to dismiss a good and honest man, because he has done that which cannot but be pleasing to God, and which the excellent laws of this Protestant country will fully justify.

“I trust you will pay some attention to this matter. I have felt it my duty to seek your interference in it, as I happen to be the superintendent of the Wesleyan societies in Tadcaster and the neighbourhood.”

This letter was treated with respect—the worthy Baronet examined the affair immediately, and in two or three days informed Mr. B. that the notice to quit was withdrawn, and that the meetings might be continued as before—and this kindness was suitably acknowledged. There are some servants “dressed in a little brief authority,” much more punctilious and exacting than their masters. When they show any tyrannical airs, the best thing is to take the opinion of their employers on the subject. Nobody will be so sure to give you all the respect to which you are entitled, as your real aristocrat. He generally claims that which belongs to him—and he is as frequently scrupulously honest in paying what others may fairly demand. It is your mushroom people who are fond of patronising, and who seem to imagine that the more they deduct from the legitimate claims of others, the more they enhance their own greatness. They deal in courtesy as though it were money, and act on the principle that the less they expend, the more their stock accumulates. We once had occasion

to write on the same subject to a Duke of we know not how many descents, and to a wealthy attorney, whose father was the architect of his own fortunes ; the Duke answered immediately—the attorney never condescended to notice our communication.

To return—Mr. Beech was remarkable for punctuality in attending his appointments, and for a conscientious discharge of his pastoral duties. It is questionable, whether he ever omitted an appointment on account of inclement weather, till within a short time of his death. And it was not unusual with him to ride eight or ten miles, solely to visit some sick or lukewarm member of his flock. He adhered also to the good old practice, of frequently addressing the societies on a Sunday evening, after the usual service ; and his advices on those occasions were often adapted to the particular state of the different societies—and were full, both of pith and point. On one occasion, at Weatherby, near Tadcaster, a protracted service, conducted by another person, had prevented his meeting the society—but in the ensuing week he wrote an address, which was read to the members by one of the leaders, at a meeting convened for the purpose—and some passages may be inserted, as they contain plain, useful advice, and afford a specimen of the mode in which he discharged this duty.

“ Tadcaster, Feb. 16th, 1843.

“ **MY DEAR BRETHREN,—**

* * *

Allow me, first, to exhort, that each of you often retire into your closet, and shut the door, but see that you shut out the

world; having done so, say vocally, ‘Thou God seest me!’ Then, let there be a strict and impartial examination of the state of your own heart,—see whether you are living in any known sin, either of omission or commission—whether you are neglecting the means of grace, or living in carelessness as to family religion and the Christian government of your own families. Whatever evil you may detect, dwell on it thoughtfully, and seriously contemplate the holiness of God—the requirements of his law, and the high privileges of the Gospel: and if you do this prayerfully, you will have a lively conviction of your need of the blood of Christ. Then approach the throne of grace with deep reverence and self-abasement, and plead with God, that for the sake of the passion and death of the Saviour, he would give you pardon, and the direct witness of the Spirit to testify your adoption. Take care not to be deceived in this matter, but wait upon the Lord with faith, until you feel the fire of divine love glowing on the altar of your heart. And then, assuredly, you will become deeply anxious to promote the happiness and salvation of your fellowmen. You will do well, also, to meditate on the necessity of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to awaken sinners, and to bring them to God.

“Next, I would advise that a certain hour of each day, say half-past twelve at noon, be set apart to plead with God, to make bare his mighty arm, and display his matchless grace in saving sinners. It will tend to increase your faith, to remember, that as many of you as may be able, are engaged in the same way at the same time. Do not forget that Jesus has said, ‘That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.’ Listen not for a moment to unbelief, but cherish the faith which cries, ‘It shall be done!’

“As you have something of a revival of religion among you, great care should be taken in conducting your prayer-meetings. Let all who can, attend them—and let them be punctual as to time. These meetings should not be held longer than an hour, unless sinners be groaning for redemption in the blood of Jesus. Even then, it is better to conclude

at the right time, that all who feel it necessary may go home; but a few should remain to direct, encourage, and pray for the penitents. At all these seasons you should maintain deep seriousness of spirit—do not make a great noise—I mean, do not get into the habit of being noisy, whether you feel well or not; but at the same time, let there be a good, scriptural, and well-timed ‘Amen!’ that the person praying may have his faith increased, by hearing there are others beside himself engaged with God. Do not pray long—two or three minutes after the opening prayer will be long enough. Let two or three pray between each singing, and never sing more than two verses. The late Rev. W. Bramwell used to say—‘Late coming, long singing, and long praying, are three sure signs of lukewarmness in a church.’ Always keep in view the blessings especially needed by yourselves and those present—penitence for the careless—pardon for the penitent—the witness of the Spirit for the doubting, and entire sanctification for the believer. Look to receive what you need there and then—remember it is said, ‘Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.’

“Again, in your prayers, express yourselves as much as possible in the language of Holy Scripture, and to this end search and meditate on God’s word daily. The man who does this, will be restrained from that undue familiarity some use with their Almighty Creator—their glorious Redeemer, and with the Holy Ghost their only Sanctifier—and which is painfully felt by many serious Christians. Cherish reverential awe, and joyous dread in your devotions—and coming from God’s presence in such a frame, if your faces do not shine, your lives will, and men will take knowledge of you that you have been with Christ.

“I particularly entreat that you will punctually attend your classes. Do not permit anything to diminish your attachment to this blessed means of grace. If you make your attendance here bend to your worldly interests, you will soon become double-minded, and unstable in all your ways. Let your class-meetings not be protracted beyond one hour—and that this may be so, speak of the state of your souls clearly

and concisely. Let two or three engage in prayer at each meeting—but not always the same persons—as that tends to formality. Avoid speaking, as comparatively foolish Christians speak, when they say, they much prefer class and prayer-meetings to the preaching of the Gospel. This is generally said by young Christians, who have recently begun to exercise in those assemblies; but a well-instructed Christian will esteem the fountain more than the stream—and he well knows, our peculiar means of grace have grown out of the ministry of the word.

“When a society of Christian people have arrived at a state of deep, humble, ardent piety—they will manifest an affectionate solicitude for the souls of others. It would be well for you to have a system of visiting those houses, whose inhabitants go not to any place of worship. These should be kindly invited to the house of the Lord, and given to see you care for their souls. Nor should those be forgotten who have long heard the word, without being saved by it. There may be many amiable points about them—but having so long resisted the truth of God, their state is alarming. Strive to bring them to some personal effort to obtain salvation. I fear many in hell reflect strongly on religious people, who were inattentive to the souls of some with whom they often met on earth. Show your love to those who surround you, by your solicitude for their eternal welfare.

“Avoid the habit, when your religious services are over, of standing and talking to each other, about any and everything. It tends to dissipate the good impressions you may have received. Go home, read, pray, and meditate. While I have been writing this, I have been called to visit a young man, who was seeking the Lord. When praying with him, his mourning was turned into joy. The peace of God filled his heart, and he cried out, ‘Glory be to God! Hallelujah!’ Let this encourage you to comfort the broken-hearted, and to try to save souls in every way. I conclude in the words of the Apostle—‘Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord be with you all.’

“Your affectionate Minister,

“HUGH BEECH.”

Mr. Beech was a man of strong common sense. Though not gifted with the more dazzling qualities of mind, his judgment might generally be depended on. Of a warm and fervent spirit, he was, nevertheless, no enthusiast. He knew how to rebuke enthusiasm, as well as to keep out of its meshes. Most of our readers will be aware, that the world, according to the prophecies of some people, is always about to be destroyed. In Mr. Wesley's days, there was one George Bell, sometime a Methodist, who spread terror through London, by vehement predictions, that on the midnight of a particular day, the second advent of the Redeemer would occur. On that evening, tens of thousands refused to retire to rest—but spent the livelong night, wandering in the fields, and looking for the final catastrophe. They preferred the open air, it is to be presumed, not because they hoped to escape the general destruction—but from much the same feeling, which leads passengers in a storm at sea, to dislike being battened down beneath hatches, and to choose to meet danger, and to face death on deck. Mr. Wesley dismissed George Bell—prohibited his holding forth in any Methodist pulpit—declared the prediction must be false, if the Bible were true—preached on the predestined evening at Spitalfields—and with his usual philosophy went to bed, and was fast asleep about ten o'clock. When Mr. B. was at Tadcaster, there was a young enthusiast, a local preacher, who, by the help of certain American publications, was so thoroughly versed in

the prophecies, as to become a modern George Bell. He declared the day of judgment would arrive at a particular time, and the burden of his pulpit efforts was like Jonah's cry—" Yet so many days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Mr. B. was obliged to interpose, and to insist, that when occupying Wesleyan pulpits in the circuit, he would refrain from soothsaying, and confine himself to preaching revealed things. The young man, who had many pleasing traits mingled with his monomania, tried to convert Mr. B. to his mode of thinking, but in vain; and as a last effort to bring him to sounder judgment, Mr. B. wrote him the following letter :—

" Tadcaster, March 13, 1844.

" MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I have received your paper, printed in America, and called the 'Voice of Elijah,' and I thank you for the regard you manifest for my welfare. I know I need to be reminded of the shortness of time, and my nearness to the eternal world—but at the same time I am grateful to God for the sense of his favour I enjoy, and for the bright hope he has given me of immortal bliss in heaven.

" I see it is possible for men to be led into vain speculations—to forget the words of the Saviour, 'Ye know not when the time is'—and to be bold enough to fix the period for the destruction of the world, and the banishment of the wicked into hell. I see it is possible for such men, when their set time is come and gone, and when the earth keeps its place in the solar system, and moves, as of old, in its orbit, to resist being convinced of their error, and to fix another time—keeping their own bewildered minds in needless anxiety, and thinking, too, they do well to be angry with those who reject their prophecies. These remarks assuredly apply to you. In the latter end of last October, I heard you say, you were as certain these great events would occur before the end of 1843,

as you were of your own existence—and yet this thirteenth day of March, 1844, the blessed sun is gloriously shining through my study window, as I write this, and I thank God for it. You have refused to be instructed by this teaching of time—for you now say, these things will take place before the 21st of this month, and that if they do not, you dare forfeit your head. Permit me to say, that when you expressed a willingness to stake your head on the truth of your predictions, I suspect you knew right well, you could not be a loser for the following reasons—first, should your prophecy be fulfilled, you no doubt calculate on a new head, and one far better than the not very strong one you now wear—and, secondly, should these things not come to pass, you knew none will claim forfeit, for all will think their own heads better, and more safely to be trusted, than the one which will so miserably have deceived you.

“ You must remember I am not writing these things about your heart—no, Sir, that I believe is better than your head. But after all, I see some signs of your coming to a sound mind. You appear, now, rather to doubt the things you affirm—for you write—‘ If these things should not come to pass as soon as we expect, still I must be in earnest.’ I sincerely hope, that as the flight of time has already proclaimed you to be an untrue prophet—you will humble yourself before God, and be not wise above what is written—but instead of listening to foolish ‘ Voices of Elijah’—listen to the voice of your Redeemer—‘ Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.’

“ You intimate, I am preaching peace and safety to my own peril and that of my hearers. Well, I confess to preaching a free, full, and present salvation through the blood of Christ. I hope you will do so too, and not meddle with secret things—as ‘ it is not for you to know the times and the seasons.’ That the Lord may put and keep us all right, both heart and head, is the prayer of your sincere friend.”

Of course, this letter was labour in vain, as all reasoning is generally thrown away on people smit-

ten by such delusions — but its intention was good, and its execution was characteristic of the man who wrote it.

It was while at Tadcaster that Mr. Beech had a remarkable escape from the clutches of a highwayman. Driving home, after preaching at Marston, about ten in the evening of the 21st of February, 1845—a man, dressed in a shooting jacket and cap, and with a pistol in his hand, suddenly stopped the horse. The animal being spirited, the robber had to use both hands to hold it—and his pistol fell to the ground. He contrived, however, to pick it up with his right hand, while he secured the bridle with the left. Then slipping that hand along the reins, and presenting the weapon in the other, he was about to step into the gig—but by this time Mr. B. was awake to his danger—snatched his whip from the socket—struck the horse, and it bounding forward, the wheel of the vehicle knocked the man down. But he was up again in a moment, and brandishing his pistol, gave chase to the fugitive, gaining on him for a while, but soon being left far behind. Mr. B. records, that on his arrival at home, he knelt down and thanked God for his deliverance; and then earnestly prayed that the robber's heart might be changed, and that better work might be found him to do.

The next night a commercial traveller of the name of Richardson, was attacked and robbed between Wetherby and Leeds, by a man similarly dressed; and in a few days the Rev. Jno. R——, then sta-

tioned at Leeds, had his watch and money taken by a man, armed with a pistol, and answering the same description. A stranger, calling himself Frederick Harrison, was found pawning Mr. R——'s watch, and as a pistol and bullets were discovered at his lodgings, and as, above all, Mr. R—— could identify him, he was tried for the offence at the ensuing York assizes—found guilty, and sentenced to twenty years' transportation. In the mean time, another suspicious character, one Robert White, had been committed for the robbery of the commercial traveller—and as this outrage occurred the night after the attempt on Mr. Beech—on the same line of road, and within a short distance—it was supposed White was the author of that attempt—and Mr. B. felt curious to see him, and to be present at his trial. As that trial afforded an example of the fallibility of human testimony, and how a complete body of evidence, both circumstantial and direct, may succeed in securing the conviction of an innocent man, we will briefly narrate the testimony of the different witnesses. The first knew White well, and saw him dressed in a cap and shooting jacket, going out of Leeds, in the direction of Wetherby, about three hours before the robbery took place. The second declared, he observed the prisoner, dressed as above, lingering in a wood by the road side, a few yards from the scene of the crime, and within half an hour of its commission. The traveller identified White as the man who robbed him, and described him as having got on the step of the gig,

put the muzzle of a pistol to his head, and threatened to blow out his brains in case of resistance. The fourth, the landlady of an inn, situated on the road to Leeds, five miles from the place of the robbery, deposed to a man of the prisoner's appearance, having come into her house, heated and panting as if from running, within an hour of the time the offence was perpetrated. The last, a female acquaintance of White's, accidentally met him in Leeds, at ten o'clock on the night in question—and while they were in conversation, noticed him transfer a pistol from one pocket to another of his shooting jacket. Of course, no protestations of innocence, and no ingenuity of defence, could avail against such a consecutive chain of evidence—tracing him, step by step, to and from the theatre of the outrage. The jury, as in duty bound, returned a verdict against him, according to the evidence—and he was condemned to a long term of transportation.

But after all, he was innocent—it was a case on the part of the principal witnesses, of mistaken identity, and White, possibly, was not far out of Leeds on the night in question. The day after he was sentenced—Harrison, previously convicted of robbing Mr. R—, wrote to the Judge, confessing himself guilty of the crime for which the other had been convicted—pointing out the resemblance between the dresses both had worn—and affording a corroboration of his confession, by directing the Judge's attention to a pocket book found on him when taken into cus-

tody, in which he had been accustomed to note the amount of his depredations—and where an entry might be seen, under the proper date, mentioning the exact sum of which the traveller had been plundered. This being so, White was delivered from the consequences of his conviction.

Mr. Beech, on hearing these things, wished to have an interview with Harrison, and to ascertain if he were the man who stopped him. This wish was gratified, by the kindness of the Governor of the Castle where the convicts were confined. Harrison came bowing into the room, with the utmost politeness, and we well remember the following conversation took place:—Mr. B. “How long is it, Frederick, since you took to the road?” “About two months, Sir!” “Did you try to do any business in your line, near Tadcaster, one night in February?” “Why yes! I stopped a stout gentleman in a gig—but I took nothing from him—was it you, Sir?” Mr. B. “Ah! you made a bungling affair of that, Frederick; I saw you knocked down that night—were you much hurt?” “Oh, no! not at all, Sir.” Mr. B. told him, the first thing he did when he reached home was to pray for him, that God might pardon him and turn his heart—and he then gave him some good advice, both in reference to his future conduct, and the salvation of his soul. They shook hands, Mr. B. prayed that God would forgive and save him—and Harrison was so affected that he could scarcely refrain from tears.

This young man had been respectably educated—served his apprenticeship to a draper in Canterbury—and on coming of age, received a considerable sum bequeathed him by a relative. With this he went to London—associated with disreputable company—and in three months was fleeced of his money. He was fond of visiting the theatre, and there saw the drama of “Jack Sheppard.” Some of our readers will remember, both the character and effect of that play. It represents a highwayman as a hero, flaunting in silk velvet, gold lace, and cambric ruffles—riding a blood horse—rolling in guineas—basking in the bold eyes of fallen beauty, and altogether leading a life, the immorality of which is eclipsed by its vulgar splendour. Its effect was not unlike that produced in Germany, by Schiller’s tragedy of “The Robbers,” when many young men, and even the scions of noble houses, procured horses, arms, and masks, and degenerated into brutal banditti. Garrison was an instance of its tendency, for having wasted his substance in riotous living, he resolved to become a second Jack Sheppard. He purchased a pistol, and went down to Newcastle-on-Tyne—and starting from thence, passed through the intermediate towns—robbing people every night on the high road for nearly two months, and arriving at Leeds before being arrested. This is astonishing, considering the presumed perfection of the police of these days—but it accords with a case we once knew of a man, who murdered his father, and then lived openly in a mid-

idle-sized town, not more than a dozen miles from the scene of his crime, for six months before justice laid hold of him. No doubt, the circumstance that he might so easily have been found, rendered it the more unlikely that he would be found at all. The most improbable place of concealment is the surest. If a man wish to hide a document everybody is seeking —let him wrap it in a worn envelope, and put it before everybody's eyes in the letter-rack above his mantel-piece!

In 1845, Mr. Beech left Tadcaster better than he found it, and removed to Thirsk—was well received, made some valuable friends—laboured as hard as ever—but with one of his colleagues, the Rev. Jno. Lewis, removed at the end of the year; principally because of some financial arrangements he could not sanction, and because he saw no promising prospects of usefulness opening to him. For many in that circuit, however, he cherished a warm regard.

At the Conference of 1846, he went to New Mills, near Stockport. He was now advancing towards the evening of life—but his energy was undiminished, and the spirit of gratitude to God, and pious zeal, with which he prosecuted his labours, may be gathered from the following passages from his letters and diary:—

“ Aug. 27, 1846. By the good Providence of God we arrived at New Mills, and were kindly received by a few friends who were waiting for us, with whom we knelt down, thanked God, and took courage. The

next morning we looked about us, and found the house good and clean, and the appearance of the place striking. Before our front windows there is a graveyard, in which numerous stones and mounds display the ravages of death, and remind me that I too must 'die, my father's God to meet.' Beyond this yard there is a valley, and opposite to us lofty rocks, on which houses are perched in all positions, and of all shapes and sizes. It would seem as if every man who intended to build, had first excavated the rock, and then put the walls in the place the stone came from. Some houses have their foundations above the roofs of their neighbours, and every man has done as seemed good in his own eyes.

"I opened my commission on the 30th—the congregations were large, and the people attentive—a devotional spirit prevailed. In the afternoon, I met two classes—one of the members I knew many years ago—he was overwhelmed when I spoke to him—the others caught the same influence, and a more softening season I have seldom seen.

"Sept. 2nd. I thank God my lot is cast at New Mills. I am persuaded my appointment is of God. I will get more of the baptism of the Holy Ghost—that divine anointing which is necessary to much usefulness. I wish to be clothed with humility as with a garment—and I will strive after a closer walk with God. I have faith He will give me some souls in this place.

"3rd. Visited a number of families in New Mills.

this morning; conversed and prayed with them; for which they were thankful, and in which I was blest. In the afternoon, I went to Hayfield, to visit the members there. I have no doubt God will make this work a blessing. On my return, called at Thornsett, preached, and met the class. The people work so late, that we cannot begin before eight in the evening, and then they are so weary, that they cannot listen with the attention so much to be desired. I wish these long hours of labour could be abridged.

“4th. Went to Waterside—received much kind attention in the family of Mr. Vickers, and feel quite at home among them. My heart is filled with lively emotions of gratitude to the God of all my blessings. I endeavour to realize by faith these words—‘your life is hid with Christ in God’—and I find unspeakable joy in claiming the promises of God as my own.

“6th, Sunday. Went to Marple—had a pleasant ride—my heart full of love, and my soul rejoicing in feeling that God is with me. Saw men breaking the Sabbath by getting in hay, and reproved them. Oh! that men were wise! Preached morning and afternoon there, and was kindly entertained at the house of Mr. E—— R——, a lovely spot, and a delightful family—full of simplicity, Christian affection, and hospitality. It pleases me to know, that ministers in connexion with Mr. Wesley, have been entertained in this house for more than sixty years—and the walls of the room I occupy have rung with praise and prayer—while the adjoining barn has often been used

for holding lovefeasts, &c. ‘The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.’ I anticipate much happiness in this sacred room. On one of the panes of the window, I see the name of Samuel Wells, who was admitted on trial in 1769, walked with God, and was a useful preacher till 1780, when he died in the Lord. My prayer is, that I may do so too—and that while I live I may be useful.

“14th. Spent the day in reading, prayer, and visiting—heard my young colleague, Mr. Hessel, at night preach a good sermon on prayer. I am thankful he is with me, and he will be made a blessing to me. I had the pleasure of recommending him for the ministry when at Tadcaster—and now he commences his itinerancy with me—I always loved him—we shall be happy together, and I pray we may be co-workers with God, and see the arm of the Lord made bare in the conversion of many sinners.”

These extracts are sufficient to show his piety and zeal. In the same spirit he laboured for the three years of his sojourn at New Mills. In the third, the Rev. S. P. Harvard was his colleague, to whom he was much attached. At the last Quarterly Meeting he attended in that circuit, many and sincere expressions of regret at his approaching departure were uttered by those present—and wishes were freely spoken that the rules of Methodism would permit his longer residence among them. He had secured the affections of the people—promoted both the spiritual and financial prosperity of the circuit—and his name is

yet dear to many in it as having been the Minister of God for good to them.

While Mr. B. was stationed at New Mills, the Annual Meeting of the Manchester and Bolton District was held at Stockport—and he was entertained during his attendance on its sessions at the house of the late venerable Dr. Newton. He esteemed this a high privilege, for no man felt a warmer admiration for the character, talents, and abundant labours of that distinguished and now sainted man. The cordial and yet dignified hospitality of the Doctor—the kind attentions of the family—and their cheerful, Christian conversation during his visit delighted him. It so happened, that a very estimable gentleman attended this District Meeting, who for some reason or caprice, had latterly allowed his razor to describe an exceedingly contracted segment of a circle on his face—and his hirsute appearance, among so many well-shaven brethren, naturally attracted considerable notice. One morning, Dr. Newton found a slip of paper lying beside his desk at the meeting, which having read, he put into his pocket, smiling and shaking his head the while. After dinner that day, he drew it forth for the inspection of his guests—observing, that it was clear there was some mischievous and merry genius among the brethren. The paper contained these words:—

“ My dear Mister—, we are anxious to know,
The reason your razor no further doth go—
Its limited route, only leaves us in doubt—
Are you in with the Jews? or have you come out? ”

If indeed with the Jews, to muster you choose,
Then still let your razor full duty refuse :
But if in this land, among Gentiles you'd stand,
In shaving, pray give greater play to your hand!"

The Doctor was not aware, there was one sitting at his table, who was, probably, the author of these playful lines.

A gentleman previously mentioned, now of Bristol, but then resident in this circuit, and with whom Mr. B. was in frequent intercourse, has, since his death, described his character with so much discrimination and justice, that we cannot more fitly close this chapter than by quoting his words :—

" Mr. Beech was a man of transparent honesty, and of childlike simplicity—an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. He was remarkable for warm feeling and strong attachments—and he freely unbosomed himself to those he loved, and with whom he felt at home. But he had a quick and nice perception of character, and carried himself with somewhat of reserve where he had not full confidence. Strictly temperate in his habits, he yet enjoyed the bounties of Providence with a relish, that was refreshing to those of a kindred spirit. What a rebuke his example would give in this respect to the ungrateful! His spirits were buoyant, and he was a man of great activity and energy. He prudently saved his strength for the pulpit, by riding to his appointments—and it may be remarked, that he was a good judge of horses, though in respect to them, somewhat fickle in his

attachments. His was the pen of a ready writer, and he was a valuable correspondent. He was a firm Wesleyan—but no bigot. His preaching was generally acceptable, and often powerful, and marked by earnestness and fidelity; and his prayers were copious and fervent. But he was particularly distinguished by his love of singing the high praises of his God—his whole soul was attuned to heavenly music, and the faintest discord offended his correct ear. How many tokens has he received from the Conference, for annually officiating as its precentor!" Such he was at New Mills, and such he remained till the close of his career.

CHAPTER NINTH.

At the Conference of 1849, Mr. Beech, at the earnest request of the circuit, and with his own glad consent, was again appointed to Carlisle. He went with high anticipations of the pleasure he should realize in renewing his ancient friendships, and in witnessing the establishment in grace of many of his spiritual children there—but he was doomed to be partially disappointed. It would be pleasant to refrain from all reference to disagreeable topics—but the duty of a biographer sometimes renders that impossible. It is his business, not only to describe how the subject of his record travelled through some well-

kept road on the journey of life—how smooth he found the path—how delightfully it was overhung with lofty trees, throwing out their cooling shadows; and hedged by roses and honeysuckles, making the air fragrant with their perfumes—but it is his also to notice, how the wayfarer breasted the storm—climbed up mountain-steeps, affording but rough and uncertain footing, and pushed his way through thickets, tanged with brushwood, and bristling with thorns.

Mr. B.'s heart was made heavy, on the day of his arrival at Carlisle, by learning, that a meeting had been held by sundry circuit officers—at which resolutions had been passed, condemnatory of the disciplinary action of the Conference just concluded. He feared this meeting foreboded uneasiness and war, and in this he was not mistaken. However, for some time things went on smoothly—those who were dissatisfied respected Mr. B. too much to throw off all restraint at once—for the first half-year the society increased—and an occasional ripple on the surface was the only indication of the tumult brewing beneath. In the meantime, agitation was spreading through almost the entire Connexion—the confidence of multitudes of Wesleyan people in the integrity of their ministers was undermined—and steps were taken, which issued in the largest secession Methodism has yet known. At length, the disturbance became apparent in Carlisle. A few individuals, generally comparatively juniors in the church, after some hesitation, adopted the extreme measures recommended

by the central reforming junto and exhibited the strange and melancholy spectacle, of church members denouncing their ministers as corrupt, and yet determining to remain in communion with them—and of advocates for liberty of conscience, threatening, and in some instances, endeavouring to starve into the adoption of their own views, the very man whose hands had first, instrumentally, broken to some of them the bread of eternal life. Neither ingratitude, nor the spirit of tyranny, could go much farther. Of course, these proceedings occasioned Mr. B. much anxiety and grief—while the trust he again held, as Chairman of the aggregation of circuits forming the Carlisle District; involving a reply to numerous applications for advice from other ministers, who found themselves in critical circumstances; increased his responsibility and trouble. But though he was a man of peace, and to use his own expression, “hated putting away”—he was sincere and firm in his attachment to the polity of Wesleyan Methodism, and shrank from no reproach in upholding it. He first endeavoured to ascertain his duty, and then he discharged it; leaving consequences to be dealt with by a higher power. He acted with caution, and according to his light, maintained, by the grace of God, a Christian temper under circumstances of no little provocation; and laboured, not to aggravate, but to mollify and heal the wounds of the church. In the conflicts which took place, he fared as well as most of his brethren. This arose, probably, partly from the

conviction of his opponents that he was thoroughly honest—and partly, from the circumstance, that though not profoundly logical, he was decidedly witty—ready at repartee, and capable of making unexpected and effective points in debate. It would be easy to quote examples of this assertion, connected with these disputes—but as it would not be wise to irritate wounds, which time has probably cicatrized—an instance or two may be given, arising out of other questions. At a great meeting, held in Carlisle, to express opposition to that Popish insolence, by which the Romanist bishops in this country were pretended to be authorized to assume territorial titles, Mr. B. was one of the speakers. Just before he rose, a dissenting minister had delivered an address, in which he intimated, that the meeting was a specimen of “much ado about nothing”—that there was no danger from any aggression Popery could make—and that, in fact, the orators were fighting a shadow. Mr. B. said—“The gentleman who has just sat down has declared we are fighting a shadow—now we know a shadow is the representation of a body intercepting a light; where a shadow is, there is a substance close at hand—and if we are fighting the shadow of Popery, we may soon expect, unless the shadow flies, to have to do with the substance.” The remark was natural and simple—but it was one of those happy impromptus none but the quick-witted utter. We remember, too, that on another occasion, a brother minister, speaking of the intolerance of cer-

tain refractory clergy, who refused to read the burial service over nonconformists, ended by saying—"Indeed, Mr. Chairman, if things proceed in this way, in a little time the clergy will not inter a man among us!" Mr. B. replied, "On the contrary, I think if Methodism continues to advance as it is doing, the clergy in question will soon be too happy to bury every man among us!" No doubt, this species of readiness in reply was somewhat dreaded by his opponents, and induced them to keep at a more respectful distance than they otherwise would have done.

There was, indeed, one young man who printed a pamphlet, attacking Mr. Beech with more coarseness than vigour—but his production awakened little attention, even in the neighbourhood; and was, on the whole, a tolerably harmless juvenile indiscretion. It drew forth, however, a letter of rebuke for its author, from a plain, sturdy farmer, to whom one of the pamphlets had been sent; and which may be inserted as a specimen of homely and pointed reproof. It ran thus:—"Dear young man—You seem far gone in a delusion. These revolutionists appear to have turned your heart from God. You did run well, who has hindered you? Your religion seems to have left your heart, and entered your head. Ponder before you write any more. You know Mr. Beech has been much honoured of God, and you seek to injure his usefulness. I will not reject the counsel of God to my own hurt, nor like Rehoboam, choose young counsellors, and lose my kingdom. My advice to you

is like David's to his servants, 'Tarry at Jericho till your beard be grown.' Yours, — — —.*

Mr. B. was comforted in his troubles by the support of his faithful colleague, the Rev. J. W. Crankshaw; and of some stanch friends, who have long stood by Methodism in Carlisle; but the spirit of strife and debate neutralized their efforts—and for a season broke the peace and checked the prosperity of the Wesleyan cause in that city. He left Carlisle in 1851, and was stationed at Douglas, in the Isle of Man.

Many persons have been accustomed to assume, that all the divisions which have occurred in Wesleyan Methodism, have arisen solely from its ecclesiastical polity. In attempting to refute such an assumption, it is relevant to state, that no species of Church government yet exercised, has succeeded, during any very lengthened probation, in preventing dissension and division. Not to speak of the Apostolic churches, which were by no means innocent of strife and debate—episcopal flocks have occasionally mocked at the mitre, and scoffed at the crosier; and Presbyterianism, established or voluntary, has wit-

* We fear, any allusion to the pamphlet above noticed, does it too much honour; as it scarcely disturbed the equanimity of its intended victim. It is true St. Paul, in one of his letters, speaks of one Alexander the coppersmith—but that individual would never have been mentioned, had he not done Paul, and had he not been capable of doing Timothy, "much evil." Perhaps, we ought to have had an equally strong reason for this reference to an attack made with greater will than power, but we have not!

nessed more than one exodus in the north of this island. Congregationalism grows by its separations, and often exhibits salamandrine qualities, flourishing amid the fires of contention—while other bodies of equally liberal complexion, sometimes seem disposed to rival the infinite divisibility of matter. Those sheep, who at different times, have forsaken the fold of old Methodism, have not always been led into green pastures, and beside still waters; nor have they invariably escaped being scattered by the incursions of wolves, either in sheep's clothing or shepherd's garments. If the ecclesiastical polity of Methodism has been the only cause of its divisions, it is fair to ask, how does it happen that under different systems of church government, secessions have been fully as numerous? Can its opponents seriously mean to convey the impression, that Wesleyan people are superior in piety to all others—inasmuch as their divisions are always occasioned by the pressure of an intolerable tyranny—while those of other churches, being free from that, consequently spring from some darker or less justifiable cause? If this be meant, it may be accepted as one of the highest compliments Wesleyans have recently received.

Our opinion is, that in any church, the incorrigible corruption of doctrine—or the strangulating stricture, or the licentious laxity of discipline, may justify secession from it as a last resort. Purity in faith and practice, closely allied as it is to Christian law and Christian liberty, is, according to the New

Testament, to be preferred to peace—and is to be secured, though at the expense of temporary tumult. But we believe, that in the history of Methodism, no sufficient reason has yet been shown for breaking its peace as a Connexion. Its doctrines are the same throughout its whole expanse; and though in the administration of its discipline, isolated instances of hardship may have occurred in its inferior courts—yet an appeal to its superior tribunals has seldom failed to obtain substantial justice. It is, however, to be apprehended, that in the matter of divisions, what has been, will be. Methodist societies are usually composed of people of somewhat heterogeneous opinions, on vexed questions of both ecclesiastical and secular politics. No specific views on these subjects, nor any particular degree, either of education or of worldly respectability, are made conditions of admission to them. Among their members they number still, as they have always numbered, churchmen and dissenters in principle, rich and poor, learned and illiterate—all brought into association by the profession of a desire to “flee from the wrath to come.” In some of these persons, the strength of that desire evaporates, sooner or later, amid the heat of temptation; though many reasons may lead them to retain their membership—but their hearts being unoccupied by the earnest pursuit of spiritual things, are open to the dominancy of evil. Disappointed ambition—rebuked pride—personal antipathies—services not acknowledged with all the incense of

praise an exaggerated estimate of their value may demand, and other similar things, may cause a ranking in their spirits. Then, when some access of enthusiasm, in favour of a particular class of opinions, seizes them—occasioned, it may be, by some successful revolution within their knowledge—the shooting forth of these roots of bitterness becomes obvious in church debate, disaffection and division. We have little hope, that any modification of Wesleyan law, or indeed, that any scheme of church government, however elaborate and scriptural in its construction, or however precise in its adjustment and administration, can ever raise, of itself, an effectual breakwater against the overflowings of strife, bitterness, and division. The best, if not the only insurance against the occurrence of these calamities, is to be found in all the members of the church, having first in the words of St. Peter, “purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren,” then being careful, that “they love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

In Douglas, Mr. Beech sojourned for three years. He greatly enjoyed the beautiful scenery, and the lively aspect of the place, thronged as it is with visitors in summer—and he was also thankful for the pleasant and commodious dwelling provided for him. The friends there gave him a cordial reception—and throughout his residence among them, showed him no little kindness. He found the circuit in comparative peace, and expressed himself as feeling something

like a passenger in a ship, which having long contended with storms and contrary winds, at length comes to anchor in some quiet haven. The congregations were large, the societies zealous and devout—and though the labour was somewhat onerous, he was able, with the help of his conveyance, almost invariably to discharge his duties. With his colleagues, the Revds. Messrs. Duke and G. W. Olver, he lived and laboured in love. He commenced his work in good health and spirits—paid constant attention, not only to his preaching appointments, but also to prayer meetings, and other social means of grace—spared no effort to meet the purely pastoral demands made upon him—and by his diligence and cheerful piety, secured the general confidence and affection of the people. His heart was in his work, and though advancing age began to tell on his memory, so far as business details were concerned—its only effect on his ministry was slightly to tone down his former exuberant action in the pulpit—without diminishing the animation of his delivery. His personal religion, too, was deepening, and gradually ripening him for heaven. A few passages from his correspondence at this time, will not be misplaced here. The first is addressed to one, who happened just then to be in some perplexity, and it will serve to exhibit the style in which he could give religious consolation, as well as the acquaintance he possessed with what may, perhaps, be deemed an imperfection in his own character.

“Douglas, Jan. 9, 1852.

“How is it? I am led more than usually to think of you, and to bring you in prayer to God. I feel deep sympathy for your numerous vexations and sorrows—but I clearly see the hand of God leading and supporting you.

‘You may stand and admire God’s outstretched arm,
You have walked through the fire and suffered no harm.’

Yes! ‘through waves, and clouds and storms, He gently clears your way.’ Well, keep trusting in the Lord, and your Christian character will not only be maintained, but you will be led on to victory. The darkness will be dispersed—these sore trials will be *behind* you—brighter days will come.

‘Wait thou His time, so shall this night,
Soon end in joyous day.’

Let us keep the prize in view, and we shall one day be translated ‘from the suffering church beneath, to the reigning church above.’ It rejoices me to think you have passed through the bitterness of death. The storm has been heavy and fierce—but it is subsiding—there may still be tumultuous waves, but Jesus is our Pilot, and when he says ‘Peace! be still!’ there will be a great calm.

“Let me urge you earnestly to look for Divine help, that you may continue to act as a Christian man. I know you will be cautious—your nature will keep you from precipitancy. Indeed, you ought to be thankful, that you have so little of my restlessness in difficulty. In church matters I have never been hasty; but in my own private affairs, I have often had cause to regret a want of caution. Many a time, I have not taken the advice of my wife, but in trying to escape some inconvenience or suffering, have to use a well-known form of expression, jumped ‘out of the frying pan into the fire.’ On such occasions, I have had to hold my peace, and bear my burden as well as I could, without seeking for much sympathy from others—though inwardly, I have heartily repented my folly. Look to God for guidance, and use your own judgment, and you will be blest and saved.”

The next extract shows how his soul was prospering, and desiring fuller conformity to the divine image and nature.

"Nov. 23, 1852.

"I am well, and my work is very pleasant. The friends treat me kindly, and I proceed in great peace and comfort. My constant cry is, 'Oh! for a closer walk with God!' This will make my duty still more delightful, and I shall have greater power both with God and the people. I am breathing after the Saviour—I am longing to be more like my Heavenly Father, and labouring every day to be prepared for the summons to my eternal home. Last Sunday, I had a blessed day—preached in the morning, on the earthly house of this tabernacle being dissolved, &c.; and in the evening, on 'The Spirit and the bride say come,' &c. The congregations were large, and at the Lord's Supper afterwards, we had about three hundred people. Mine is a happy and honourable employment. What am I, and what is my father's house, that God should have been so mindful of me?

"You did not see at Chesterton, as you imagined, the house in which I was born, for it has been taken down long ago—and so, indeed, has the more memorable house in which I was born again; but I could go to the very spot of my new birth, and I thank God the marks of that divine change, neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil, have been able to wear out yet, nor I believe ever will.

'I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace,
For evermore!'"

The following passage is extracted from a letter, addressed to a comparatively young minister, whose health appeared precarious, and who having had to encounter difficulties arising from the prevailing agitation of the Wesleyan body, and other causes; was

disposed to look on the dark side, both of his individual prospects, and those of the church to which he belonged. At that time, too, he was frequently engaged in furnishing leading articles for a weekly journal ; and his productions meeting with tolerable acceptance, he had been inclined to suppose, that in the event of ill health, or other circumstances, compelling him to retire from the full work of the ministry, he might find a resource in journalism, and kindred literary pursuits. No doubt, he was much mistaken, as his vocation lay in another direction ; to say nothing of the glorious uncertainty of success in any line of authorship. However, he had stated his views and feelings to Mr. Beech, who replied in these terms :—

“ I am truly sorry you suffer so much from your throat, but I have some reason to believe you have not been sufficiently careful of it. Long preaching in large chapels, and exposure to night air and bad weather, without any protection, have curtailed the day of labour of many a strong man. I still think, that with proper attention, your voice will be soon restored, and you may live and labour for many years.

“ I believe you are suffering under temptation. And I advise you to beware of engaging to write for newspapers. It would be little better than frittering away the best part of your life. It never did the late Richard Watson any good, except, perhaps, to improve and polish his style. I fear it will not tell well upon your soul, or on your work. Other men may do it innocently and usefully, but it is not a Methodist Preacher’s calling. Your work is more sacred—it is to save souls. If you do much in that way, your Master, who has employed you for fourteen years in the noblest of all callings ; who has supported and blest you in it, may look shy, and remove farther from you ; and amidst the commotion of

political party warfare, the dove-like spirit may depart from your breast, and then you will neither be so happy nor so useful. I believe you will derive no benefit from it.

"As to Methodism, she will weather the storm, though the sea is certainly very tempestuous. But after the storm comes a calm. Like the Zion of old, 'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.' "

Perhaps, some readers may think Mr. Beech did not duly appreciate the importance of the periodical Press as an instrument of good. There can be little doubt, that journalism exerts an immense influence in this country, and has become a power so great as to entitle it to be regarded as the Fourth Estate of the realm. To a considerable extent, it moulds the opinions, and leaves its traces in the habits and conduct of the nation. The amount of indifference, and of opposition to spiritual religion pervading it, is appalling. In some cases, it is atheistic—in others, fearfully licentious—and in most, decidedly latitudinarian. With but few exceptions, it is fond of consulting the sky and the clouds in religious matters—and its finger, instead of pointing steadily in the direction indicated by the law and gospel of Christ—often veers with every breath, turning easily on the pivot of a miserable expediency. Considering its power on public opinion and practice, the greater controul men of true religion can obtain over it, the better. It cannot, therefore, be abstractedly wrong, for a Christian man to give his views of civil liberty, political principles, parliamentary proceedings, go-

vernmental tendencies, and passing events from the stand-point of revealed truth. But whether a minister of the Gospel should systematically dabble in the comparatively muddy waters of secular politics, may admit of question. He should, doubtless, use the best means within his reach to maintain and spread the great principles, applicable to rulers and subjects, laid down in the Bible—but he should avoid mere party questions—and should always feel himself in too responsible a position, entrusted with the building of the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem, to be able frequently to come down from his great work, and fight with every political Sanballat who may choose to challenge him. To preach the Gospel is his great business—and whatever may interfere with his doing so efficiently, should be either not meddled with, or speedily abandoned. The remarks of Mr. B. on this subject, though, perhaps, not sufficiently discriminating, are, nevertheless, right in the main.

A few sentences may be given from another letter, as it records an instance of providential care, and shows the grateful feelings it awakened to the God of all his mercies.

“ Douglas, Sept. 26th, 1853.

“ We may sing of the goodness of God. Yesterday, we had a hurricane raging almost all the day; so that after holding the lovefeast in the afternoon, I remained in the neighbourhood of Thomas-street chapel, till the evening service. When giving out the hymn after preaching, a note was put into my hand, requesting me to return home immediately, as the chimney of the house had fallen—but Mrs. B. and the servant

were unhurt. I found there much devastation; my kind neighbour, Captain Gill, was hard at work, with some men, endeavouring to make the house water-tight, and habitable for the night. It seems, that good Mr. Christian, from a window of the House of Industry, saw the chimney rocking and tottering in the wind, and having run through Captain Gill's house, he opened our front door, and shouted, 'Come out of the kitchen this moment, the chimney is just falling!' As soon as Mrs. B. and Eliza got into the passage, down it came with an awful crash, breaking through the roof and ceiling, between the study door and staircase; smashing the windows, and making the little pantry underneath a perfect ruin—but nobody was hurt. Had not Mr. Christian been sent of God at that moment, the servant, at least, would have been killed, as she was just going to the pantry; and Mrs. B. might have been so too,—but 'the very hairs of our head are all numbered.' The house is covered with mortar, bricks, and dust—but no matter; all is well. This renewed instance of God's goodness has made me humble and thankful, and it leads me to love him more than ever."

"Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward"—and Mr. Beech was now called to endure the greatest sorrow of his life. On Thursday, Nov. 17th, 1853, she, who had been the wife of his youth, and for nearly forty years his faithful and pleasant companion, adding to his joys and dividing his griefs, was taken from him, almost at a stroke. The Sunday morning before her death, in spite of much feebleness, induced by frequent sickness and advancing years, she had gone up to the house of God—joined in the songs and prayers of the militant Church for the last time, and listened to the proclamation of the Gospel from the lips of her old acquaintance and friend, the Rev. A. Watmough. On her return home, she remarked

to her servant—that one hymn which had been sung, (the 626th) was peculiarly sweet to her soul, and she should be obliged by its being read aloud. This was done, and afterwards, she kept repeating to herself some of its beautiful, faith-sustaining stanzas. Now she would say,—

“Jesus, to thee we fly,
On thee for help rely;
Thou our only refuge art,
Thou dost all our fears controul,
Rest of every troubled heart,
Life of every dying soul.”

Then she would murmur—

“Our anchor sure and fast,
Within the veil is cast;
Stands our never-failing hope,
Grounded in the holy place;
We shall after thee mount up,
See the Godhead face to face.”

No doubt, the shadow of her approaching change was beginning to fall around her. That evening she was seized with illness—and her sufferings became excruciating—but no murmur of complaint escaped her lips. Like many other eminently devoted Christians, she had often felt a dread of the dark valley—a shuddering at its anticipated gloom and horror—but now that she had been led into its awful precincts by her divine Shepherd, she feared no evil—his rod and his staff comforted her. Her heart trusted in him, and his presence made the valley “flame with light.” If the most amiable temper—the most spotless morality—and the most charitable life, could

have afforded her any good ground of confidence—she had them all—but her soul turned from herself, and rested on the great atonement of the Redeemer. The words oftenest on her lips were these :—

“ Standing now as newly slain,
 To thee I lift mine eye!
 Balm of all my grief and pain,
 Thy grace is always nigh :
 Now, as yesterday, the same,
 Thou art, and wilt for ever be,
 Friend of sinners, spotless Lamb,
 Thy blood was shed for me.”

Frequently, too, she repeated those lines—

“ Fix’d on this ground will I remain,
 Though my heart fail and flesh decay;
 This anchor shall my soul sustain,
 When earth’s foundations melt away;
 Mercy’s full power I then shall prove,
 Loved with an everlasting love.”

And then, with all the energy of her sinking frame, she would exclaim :—

“ Arise, my soul arise,
 Thy Saviour’s Sacrifice!
 All the names that love could find,
 All the forms that love could take,
 Jesus in himself hath join’d,
 Thee, my soul, his own to make.”

When Psalms, and other appropriate portions of God’s word were read, she testified, by the expression of her countenance, and by gestures, how sweet she found them ; and in her last moments of consciousness, she took the Bible into her hands, and kissed it in pious rapture, calling on all in the room to help her

to praise the Lord—and then looking upwards, said:—“There will be an abundant entrance ministered to a poor worm, through the gates into the city.” She fell asleep in Jesus, having almost completed the sixty-fifth year of her age.

There was an extraordinary circumstance, alleged to have taken place the night previous to her death, which may be mentioned; though it will, probably, be received with incredulity by some—or supposed capable of a natural explanation by others. Her faithful servant, who, with another friend, were in attendance upon her—affirms she suddenly heard the swells and cadences of sweet music in the room, which continued for some minutes, and then died away. She represents the strain as having been so soft and mellow and rich, as infinitely to surpass everything to which she had previously listened; and as to more than realize her highest imaginings of the ravishing melody produced by celestial minstrels, “harping with their harps.” Her companion in watching heard nothing—but the countenance of the dying saint was illuminated with joy—her hand was uplifted in the attitude of one intently listening—and she uttered the words, “Music ! Music !”

We see no sufficient reason to question the absolute truth of this statement. It is not altogether without precedent. In the autobiography of Mr. Jeremiah Lacy, contained in the October number of the Methodist Magazine, for 1802, there is a similar circumstance related. He says,—“One fine summer’s

day, about twelve o'clock, as I was sitting near the school-room window, which was open, my attention was suddenly called to the most delightful music I ever heard, ascending upward into the clouds, so that I was almost overwhelmed with the ecstasy and delight I felt. And as none of my school-fellows heard the music, I concluded that my youngest brother, who had been thought a long time at the point of death, and for whom I had great concern, was now ascending with the angelic host into the regions of eternal bliss. On my return home from school, I was informed that my brother died exactly at the time I heard the music. From this circumstance, I had no more doubt of his state of bliss than of my own existence, and longed to be with him."

But putting aside any parellel case—there is no great weight of improbability against the thing itself. The New Testament affirms, that the angels of God are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" and we know no ground to conclude, that if they benevolently attend Christ's people during the journey of life—they will abandon the objects of their solicitude at the last step of the toilsome path. On the contrary, we may fairly gather, from our Saviour's account of that which took place after the death of Lazarus the beggar, that angels wait about the dying bed of the saints, ready to conduct their spirits, when disembodied, to a state of happiness—for Lazarus "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." It would, there-

fore, be unlikely, that the departure from this world, of one who had been so deeply devoted to her heavenly Master as Mrs. B., should not have been honoured by the attendance of a celestial convoy.

Having thus attempted to account for the presence of angels in the case before us—the circumstance of their music becoming audible to mortal ears, remains to be considered. On this point we venture to suggest—there is good reason to believe, that the human spirit already possesses powers of perception superior to bodily organs—and which, to spare many words, we may call spiritual senses—adapted to meet its necessities in that intermediate state of existence, stretching from the period of death to the morning of the resurrection. It may be, that those powers are generally dormant—but their latency affords no good argument against their existence. Perhaps, few will be disposed to deny the probability of this suggestion—especially when they remember that the highest modern authority on such subjects, (the late Sir William Hamilton) has expressed himself thus:—“However astonishing, it is now proved beyond all rational doubt, that in certain abnormal states of the nervous organism, perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of the senses.” Supposing the suggestion to be admitted—it may be asked, whether it is not probable, that sometimes, when the spirit is hovering about the brink of eternity—and at other times too—these latent spiritual senses may, by the immediate interposition of God,

or by other causes incomprehensible to us—be stimulated to activity, and may then apprehend sights and sounds, invisible and inaudible in ordinary circumstances? We almost dare give an affirmative answer to this question—and we think that answer is warranted by a remarkable passage of Holy Scripture. Most readers of the Bible will recollect, that a certain king of Syria was once sorely provoked at, what modern mesmerists would term the *clairvoyance* of the prophet Elisha—but what we believe to have been knowledge conveyed by a divine power. This king had, with the help of his counsellors, sketched the plan of a campaign in the territory of Israel, and had decided on the locality of his camps—but his schemes were penetrated by the seer, and their accomplishment frustrated by information communicated to the enemy. He took measures to capture Elisha in his own house; and one morning, the servant of the prophet going out early, found the city where they dwelt, surrounded by a host of Syrian chariots, horses, and soldiers. He ran back in a fright, crying, “Alas! my master! how shall we do?” Elisha answered, “Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” 2 Kings vi. 15—17. Now from this passage it is plain, there were hosts of supernatural beings

protecting the prophet, though invisible, at first, to all save himself. It also affords fair ground for presuming, that the same faculty which rendered him acquainted with their presence, was possessed by the young man—but lay undeveloped till the prayer of the prophet, and the answering illumination of heaven, brought it into play. The man of God did not ask that eyes might be given to his servant, but that they might be opened—that powers already existing might be stimulated into action. Now, if a single credible instance can be adduced, of the development of one hitherto latent spiritual sense, while the soul was yet in conjunction with the body, and for the purpose of removing the terrors of a young man apparently in danger—and this is such a case—the probability of the occurrence of other cases of the same kind is increased, especially when those other cases are evidently intended, either to console or cheer dying Christians, or to confirm the faith of the living in the truth of the Gospel. If by the special power of God, the servant of the prophet was enabled to see much more than could be detected by his bodily organs—why may not others hear more than strikes the outward ear, by the operation of the same power? And if this be so, it would be presumptuous to assert, that the music said to have been floating on the air in the dying chamber of Mrs. Beech, had no real existence—but was the mere effect of imagination. We may be forgiven for supposing, that it might rather be, either the sweet whisper of angels to a just spirit

about to be made perfect, saying, “ Sister spirit come away !”—or some distant and faint reverberation of that, to us, unutterable song of Moses and the Lamb, in which the departing one was speedily to join. While we receive with caution and doubt, current stories of the appearance of ghosts, we hold the Scripture doctrine of angelic ministration ; and we believe, that on rare occasions, there may be cases of such an awakening of the interior powers of perception, that the soul, though yet in the body, may be conscious of the presence, and may catch the voices of celestial messengers.

But dismissing this topic—it may be observed, that Mrs. Beech was an excellent and mature Christian. From her childhood she had feared and loved the Saviour. God had called her, as he did Samuel, in the dawn of life. When scarcely seven years old, one Sunday afternoon, she was reading in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, about the Interpreter’s house ; when divine light shone on her understanding, and her sins were pressed on her conscience. That evening, at a village prayer-meeting, she cried aloud, with many tears, for mercy—and almost all present prayed and wept with the young disciple. On retiring to rest, she could not sleep, and her soul refused to be comforted, till having aroused her mother, and sent for the class-leader, her little heart found peace with God. From that time, with but few interruptions, and those confined to the dangerous days of early youth, she walked closely with God. The graces of

humility, patience, and charity, were conspicuous in her. To glorify the grace of God in her, the only surviving member of her family hesitates not to declare, that he cannot recall a single instance in which she manifested an unchristian temper, or uttered an ungracious or foolish word. "She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness."

How she "loved the habitation of the Lord's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth"—how often, through the decay of strength, in her latter years, she literally toiled to the sanctuary—how in much feebleness and trembling, but with words of wisdom and grace, she fed the little flock committed to her as a class-leader—how she recommended religion, especially to the young—how she discountenanced censoriousness—how she systematically relieved the poor—how she laboured to establish or support different charitable institutions—in short, how she abounded in every good word and work—multitudes in the various circuits in which she spent the days of her pilgrimage, know full well.

What she was as a friend—how faithful, affectionate, and judicious—how desirous to promote the highest interests of those with whom she associated—there yet remain some living witnesses, and no small amount of correspondence, full of piety and intelligence, to testify.

But how she adorned religion in her own family—how regularly she attended to private devotion, and

how carefully she looked to the ways of her household—how neat and frugal, and yet generous—how mindful of the claims, property, and feelings of others—how good a wife—how tender and loving a mother—and how kind, condescending, unexacting, and thoughtful a mistress—how, too, there was always a perfume of gentleness and grace about her whole demeanour at home—few now can tell, as she had but three servants in thirty years—and with the exception of one son, who embalms her memory in his heart—all her family have passed into the skies. Suffice it to record, that she was one of the purest spirits, and one of the most faultless characters we can imagine. The only semblance of a flaw in her, was an excess of sympathy for the sorrows, and an undue anxiety for the welfare of those she loved; but surely an error, so nearly allied to virtue, can scarcely leave a spot upon her robe of white! Hundreds of kindly Manx testified their respect to her virtues and memory, by attending her mortal remains to their last resting-place—and by singing as they were borne along, those words of music and of faith—

“Our friend is gone before
To that celestial shore;
She hath left her mate behind,
She hath all the storms outrode!
Found the rest we toil to find,
Landed in the arms of God!”

The loss of such a wife deeply affected Mr. Beech. He had, however, all the alleviations which divine

grace—the hope of re-union in a brighter world—and the sympathy of a host of friends—who wrote him letters expressive of the high estimation in which they held the departed saint—could afford. Still, the world seemed to have had a sudden gloom thrown over it to him—and the shock of separation evidently wrought in a few weeks, the withering effect of years on his appearance and frame. Two or three sentences, selected from letters written about this time, will best exhibit his feelings. “I am as well as I can expect, but low and feeble. I am trying to say, ‘Thy will be done !’ but I find it hard work. I preached thrice on Sunday, and administered the Lord’s Supper. I felt God with me, sustaining and comforting me, but none can tell all I feel. Life appears to me a wilderness—a blank. As I was returning from the country on Monday night, after preaching—I was much depressed by meditating on my worthlessness: and I thought if I were to fall from the horse, and thereby reach heaven, it would more accord with my feelings and wishes than anything else—when suddenly, the horse started, and threw me from the saddle—but though very near the ground, in some inexplicable manner I regained my position. I fancied that, possibly, that dearly beloved one, who for nearly forty years had ministered to my wants on earth, had been commissioned by my Heavenly Father to protect me in my danger, being, as I am assured I am, one of the heirs of salvation. The idea comforted me—and I am ready to infer the Saviour has a little more

work for me to do on earth—so I will anew give myself to him, and again endeavour to work for God and to do good.” Shortly after, he expresses himself in the following language : “ My mind is kept in perfect peace. I have a pretty constant sense of my dependence on my Redeemer, and an assurance that he smiles upon me. In my pulpit exercises he comforts and upholds me, and gives me favour in the eyes of the people. They say, the afflictive dispensation through which I am passing, has done me good. This I know, I feel near the eternal world. The earth is to me a dreary desert, but I am going up out of it, leaning on the arm of my beloved. But as to what will become of me after next Conference, should I live, I am ignorant, but perfectly easy about it. For the first time, for forty years, I am without an invitation. I suppose the people everywhere think me old and useless—and yet, I feel well again now, and can get through my work with as much ease and pleasure as for many years past. Perhaps, in these times, and at my advanced period of life, I ought scarcely to take upon myself the responsibility of a circuit, when there are so many young men of whom I may say, ‘ They must increase, but I must decrease.’ Well, I am in the hands of the Lord, and his servants : let them do with me as seemeth them good.”

His spirits gradually recovered their tone under the healing influence of time, and by the many attentions of his friends in Douglas ; but there is some reason to believe that towards the conclusion of his

sojourn there, the disease which carried him off was incipient. He began to be troubled with an intolerable thirst—but as it was the only symptom of unhealthiness generally present, it awakened little attention. Just before going to the Birmingham Conference, he had a brief attack of sickness. He took his place, however, in the preparatory Stationing Committee—and discharged the other duties devolving upon him as usual. He was entertained at the house of one previously unknown to him—but whose kindness was as great as if ancient friendship had inspired it. It is somewhat of a coincidence, that Dr. Beecham was another guest of the same worthy host. These ministers enjoyed each other's company greatly. Both were in the autumn of life—but from their hale appearance seemed likely to become very old men. Within less than two years—after being laid aside but a few days—both were called into another world, precisely two months intervening between the dates of their death. “Our fathers! where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?”

At this Conference, Mr. Beech was appointed to Cheadle, in Staffordshire. He removed from Douglas with regret—for there he left, awaiting the resurrection of the just, the remains of one he had long loved. He felt ever after an attraction towards that lovely island—and often talked of spending the evening of his days there. As he was about crossing the Irish Sea, for the last time, a crowd of people were left behind, by the sudden sailing of the packet. He

was on board, and seized on the circumstance as affording an opportunity of attempting to do good—so he cried aloud—“They that were ready went in, and the door was shut!”—adding some observations on the importance of constant preparation for the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom. On his arrival at Cheadle, he was kindly received—his public labours were full of life and power—he aimed at saving souls—and one effect of his ministrations was seen in the speedy increase of the congregations in some of the chapels, especially on week-nights—while his cheerful conversation, and general pleasant cordiality of demeanour, warmly attached many of the people to him. He could not, however, be insensible to the contrast between the bustle of a much-frequented watering place like Douglas, and a little, quiet, country town—any more than to the difference between the position occupied by Methodism in the former, with its large chapel, and corresponding congregation and society—and the comparative insignificance of the cause in the place of his present residence—its sanctuary being small—its members few—and its influence limited by the ascendancy of Popery on the one hand—and by different branches of the Protestant Church on the other. In this circuit, too, he had no colleague—and these things, combined with other causes, pressed upon him, at first, a sense of solitude. In a letter written soon after his entrance on the circuit, he says—“The postman calls very seldom at my house now. Well, I will correspond more with hea-

ven. In my troubles, I was once accustomed to meet with much sympathy and support from one who is now

‘Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.’

But I have none on earth to apply to. Still, I have my Heavenly Father to go to in all my trials, and he keeps me in perfect peace.” The feeling of a stranger, however, soon wore off, and before long, he writes in a strain more like himself:—“I have been much blest in my work, and good will be done here yet. I am happy—my health and spirits are not to complain of, glory be to God! The people seem cheered with their appointment—and none could be kinder to a poor old man—but then, you know, the *new* is on me yet. Mr. Allen and family, of Woodhead Hall, are exceedingly friendly. God has given me some tokens for good, but I shall not be satisfied without winning souls to Christ. I shall have them, I doubt not; but the Pope and the devil seem to hold the people so fast, it is hard to get them out of their clutches. Well, ‘Jesus, the Conqueror, reigns!’”

Again he writes:—“I have a good deal of anxiety and trouble about our Missionary Meetings—as having no colleague, all the detail falls on me. At one, the other night, I could obtain no help, lay or clerical, save a good old man, who officiated as chairman. You will remember that ingenious old traveller, who one night secured a bed to himself in an inn, which happened to be so full, that all the couches were to be

occupied by two or three. He retired early, and locked the room door. Some time after, somebody thundered at the door, and in reply to a question of 'Who's there?' said, 'I am to sleep with you in that bed!' 'Sleep here!' was the answer, 'Why, there's no room for you here—for in this bed already there's George ———' mentioning his own name, and myself, and a man from ———,' naming the place from which he came. Well, I carried on the meeting on the same principle, for I directed the chairman to call—1st, the Rev. Hugh Beech; 2nd, the Superintendent of the Cheadle circuit; and 3rd, a minister recently come from the Isle of Man. We had three speeches—and the people were wide awake."

He felt the severe weather in the early part of 1855, very keenly—but neither frost, snow storms, nor age, could keep him from his beloved employment. Under date of Feb. 13th, he says—"I am still going about doing good—but I never felt anything like the recent severity of the cold. Last Thursday night was unspeakably bitter. In going to Dilhorn, I expected to have been capsized in crossing the ice on a stream in the road, but the pony behaved well. I was not expected, but I stopped and preached to eight people—the chapel being almost blockaded with snow. It was not thought safe for me to return by the way I came; so a strong man led the horse through a number of fields—the drifts of snow almost overwhelming us by the way—till I came to a road I knew. Then I drove on, with my eyes almost

blinded by the pelting of the storm, till by the good Providence of God I safely reached home, and was thankful for a good fire—and after having supped and prayed, I sang as usual—

‘ And now another day is gone,
I’ll sing my Maker’s praise,
His mercies every hour make known,
His providence and grace.’ ”

The zeal which marked his juvenile efforts had not yet evaporated ; for in the May of 1855, we find him recording a visit to his old friends at Compstall, near New Mills, who heartily welcomed him ; and where, not satisfied with being appointed to preach for the Sunday School, on the afternoon and evening of the day of his visit—he spent the morning in addressing many hundreds of people in the open air. In the July of that year, he met his brethren in the Conference for the last time—conducted the singing in that assembly with no perceptible diminution of energy and skill ; and after having received, what always delighted him, the thanks of the Conference for his services, he returned to Cheadle, and addressed himself to his usual duties with renewed diligence. Little did many of his brethren think, when they separated at Leeds, that they should see his face no more in the flesh—for his eye was not dimmed, nor, apparently, was his natural vigour abated ; though the seeds of mortal disease were then, undoubtedly, secretly germinating. However, the All-wise Disposer of events had ordained, that ere

another annual meeting, he should have joined the upper choir, and have been added "to the general assembly and church of the first-born;" and that he should be to his friends on earth, only as a fragrant memory—or as the recollection of "a very lovely song, of one that had a pleasant voice." For some months he continued his labours, but, occasionally, felt a strange exhaustion, which he attributed to the advance of age, and regarded as a warning that he should prepare to retire from the full work of the ministry. His soul, however, was prospering—an increasing seriousness was manifest in his deportment, and there was about his religious experience, that indescribable and gracious mellowing, which frequently foreruns the stretching out of the hand of the divine husbandman, to gather the ripe fruit, and to lay it in his garner. He thus writes:—"Dec. 5th, 1855. God is my God—and my Saviour is my all. I begin to think I ought to retire from the circuit work, and spend the remnant of my days in trying to serve my glorious Master in some narrower sphere. Last Sunday, I preached at Cheadle in the forenoon—then rode off to Alton, and preached there in the afternoon—and in the evening, preached again at Cheadle. The sermon at night seemed to impress the people—but it almost finished me. I nearly fainted, and had to sit down—but got through at last. I was almost ready to murmur, that no one came to ask how I was—but when I recollect that there was one who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities, I was comforted, and

filled with gratitude. So I slowly walked home, and soon was rather better. On Monday, I was unfit for duty; but being partly recovered on Tuesday, I went to Tean, and was most kindly treated by the friends. I preached on "This man receiveth sinners;" and had a blessed time, and was very happy in my work. I treated the subject after this fashion—I. The Receiver: II. The Received: III. The terms: and IV. The purposes of their Reception. I am told my preaching is yet profitable, and sometimes powerful; but I know my own feelings best. I have not the energy when out of the pulpit I once had—to lay down and rest, now suits me better than it used to do. May God direct the remainder of my course—and may my sun go down in a clear sky!"

On Christmas day, of the same year, he writes:—"At family prayer this morning, I was deeply humbled at the remembrance of God's inestimable love in the gift of his Son; and at the consideration of his goodness to me and mine. I was never more drawn out in prayer than I am now. God is with me; and makes my heart as a well-watered garden. I have fully resolved to become a Supernumerary next Conference; and my Heavenly Guide seems opening my way to a place where I can be both happy and useful. My dear friend, Dr. Hannah, has suggested Summerseat, near Bury, as a suitable situation for me. In reply to a letter I have written Mr. K., I am invited to pay a visit there, that I may see the place and the people, and form some idea of what

may be expected from me. At all events, wherever I may be placed, my residue of days or years shall all be devoted to that Saviour to whom my more than all is due. I am about to go to Tean, to partake of the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Sinzininex—and after, I intend to preach on the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings. The Lord give me help and blessing!"

The visit to Summerseat, alluded to above, was paid within about a fortnight of the commencement of his fatal illness. He returned home, highly gratified with the kindness shown him, and with the testimony he had received from some individuals, as to his former, but till then unknown, usefulness in the Bury circuit. He was in good spirits at the anticipation of being placed in a sphere where he might still be of some use, and where the evening of his life might glide happily away. But man proposes, and God disposes: and that evening was about to close with comparative suddenness. On January 20, 1856, he preached his last sermon. The text was so appropriate to his real position and prospects, that it might have been selected in obedience to a presentiment. It was those words of the great Apostle:—"For I am now ready to be offered; and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them

also that love his appearing." During the ensuing week, he attended several Missionary Meetings; and at Kingsley, on the Wednesday evening, spoke with all his customary clearness and vigour. He remarked, that while on his knees at the commencement of the meeting, two passages of Scripture had struck his mind with unusual force: one was—"And God looked on the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth :" and the other was—"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." He then made some pertinent observations on the corrupt state of the heathen world, and on the glorious future awaiting the human race—and pointed out the Gospel as the only means of introducing the universal knowledge of the Saviour. On Saturday, the 26th, he was busily engaged with his kind friend, Mr. S—, in finishing the Missionary account for the year—and after handing it to the treasurer for the circuit, he expressed himself as feeling relieved of a burden that had weighed on his mind. That evening, he was suddenly seized with mortal illness. He supposed the attack to be but temporary—and believed rest and medical assistance would speedily restore him. This, however, was not the case. One of the last letters he wrote was addressed to his son, and contained the following words:—

"Jan. 31st, 1856. This comes from my room of affliction, where I have been confined since Saturday night. I had just made up my Missionary accounts,

and returned home with a happy mind, when I was suddenly seized with much pain in my chest, and great difficulty of breathing. Medical aid was procured—but all night, and the day after too, I trembled very much. This has been brought about, I suppose, by the action of the cold weather. The friends are very kind. On Sunday, many came to enquire after me. Mr. Allen walked down from Woodhead Hall, and he prayed most sweetly with me. He and his are kind to me in many ways. Last night, in the earlier part of it, I felt better; but after midnight, the difficulty of breathing returned. I found it hard work—but it is all right. My friends, Mr. and Mrs. Dean, of Burslem, having heard of my affliction, came over on Tuesday, and I was very glad to see them.

“ Well, John, I do feel very weak and ill—but hope soon to be better. I cannot tell what the Lord will do with me—but I am in his hands and am happy. Glory be to God! This morning I have received a very honourable and pleasing letter from Mr. J. R. K_____, about Summerseat. Well, all will be right—and if I do not go to the house there, I shall go to that better house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I have all needful attention, and if worse, will write or send again. I have profit in praying for you and the dear children. God bless you all!”

On Feb. 2nd he wrote—“ I think I am somewhat better. I am anxious about the circuit, but application has been made, with my sanction, for a supply.

I can only write further to say, I am safe in God.” On the 5th, his son went to see him, and was convinced that his life was in immediate danger. Medical opinions confirmed this conclusion—and finding, that no distinct intimation of his real condition had been made to the patient—he deemed it right to communicate the probability of his sickness being mortal. He answered, with the utmost composure—“ Well, John, I hardly thought I should go so soon; but many of my brethren have died about my age. I rest on the blood of Christ, and all is well. Many a time in my life, I have had to come and trust in that. Christ is my Saviour, and I don’t know that it matters much to me whether I go to heaven in ten days or ten years.” For about a week after, some hope was awakened by the effect of vigorous medical treatment; but after that time he was evidently sinking. It was, however, matter of thankfulness, that he had no pain—but was able to walk about his chamber, and to converse easily and cheerfully—having mainly to contend with a frequent and overpowering drowsiness. He received his friends with all his former cordiality and courtesy—and responded to the prayers offered in his room, as heartily as ever.

To the Rev. W. Wears, who often visited him, he said—“ It is not justification from man I want now, or I could easily get it—but it is an affair between God and my soul—and I bless his name! that I have redemption in the blood of Christ.”

To the Vicar of Cheadle, who was kind enough to call to enquire after him, he expressed himself as trusting on the Great Atonement—as possessing the direct witness of the Holy Spirit, testifying his adoption into God's family—and as having the fear of death entirely taken away.

To his friends in the circuit, and to some of his relations from Burslem, who came to see him, he spoke with all the confidence of a mature Christian, as to the truth, power, and blessedness of the doctrines he had preached—and assured them that they were saving truths—sustaining and comforting his own heart, under the decay of physical strength. He was also continually quoting appropriate verses—praying and praising God. Sometimes he said—

“ Fix'd on this ground will I remain.”

“ I have no other foundation than the blood of Christ, and it is enough, blessed be God !” At other times he cried out—

“ Thou Lamb of Calvary,
My faith looks up to thee;”

“ I am a worm—a poor worm, but saved at last—
saved at last !”

There was a remarkable absence of anything like anxiety, hurry, or fear, about him; his soul was in perfect peace. Neither had he lost his interest in his friends, nor in the religious questions of the day—but he would read his letters, and listen to the intelligence of the “ Watchman,” with attention and pleasure. Occasionally, too, there were gleams of

humour about him—and he would speak of himself and his feelings, in a style approaching pleasantry. Once he said, “Perhaps I may live a little longer—but I shall be something like a worn-out horse, of no use to anybody—but if so, Christ will lead me into green pastures, and beside still waters.” In answer to a question as to his feelings, he said, with the old smile on his face—“Why, I do not, at this moment, feel that sort of ecstatic joy, which would lead me to pull off my cap, and throw it up in the air, and shout Hallelujah! every moment—but I have settled peace—solid comfort.” He manifested, too, the utmost gratitude for the constant attention paid him by his servants—and by a kind lady who lived next door—and who, though a member of another religious community, was unremitting in her assiduities, and well deserved his thanks.

On Saturday, February 16th, he was very feeble, but was much comforted by a letter, received by his son, from the Rev. John B——, who expressed himself in the following terms:—“I have long known, and cordially loved your dear father; and always calculated on the advantage of reaching home before him. He will remember my residence at Thorp-arch, when few of my friends indulged the expectation of my surviving till now; and I shall always revert with grateful pleasure to the comfort and profit I derived from his pointed and racy preaching, under those circumstances. And now he is peacefully entering the haven; whilst we are buffetting with the

restless billows, and toiling only, to gain the blessed shore. May an abundant entrance be given to him ! 'I will come,' says the Saviour, whom he has preached, and in whom now he trusts, 'I will come to receive you to myself, that where I am, ye may be also.' What a blessed reception ! And has not he the advantage of us, who is on the point of realizing its ineffable glory ? The less of earth—the more of heaven.

"If your dear father is still with you, give him my heart's best love, with my fervent prayers for his peaceful and triumphant departure. The interval of separation cannot be long ; and I rejoice in the hope of meeting him amidst the spirits of the just made perfect, in the paradise of God."

Sunday, February 17th, was his last Sabbath on earth, and it was evidently to him a day of hallowed enjoyment. Up to this time, there were occasional indications of a wish to recover ; but now he became anxious to depart. Among other things, he said— "Early this morning, I had so sweet a manifestation of divine love, that I forgot my sinking tabernacle ; and whether in the body or out of the body, I could scarcely tell. I can give up earth, and all in it— heaven is to me infinitely the more attractive place. Oh ! I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. If a choice were given me now, I should go to glory at once !" In the evening, at the time public service is usually commenced, he said,— "Now the great congregations are singing the high

praises of God—and I am having, what has not been common with me—a silent Sabbath: here I am, poor, feeble, helpless—but it will soon be over; I shall join the general assembly and church of the first-born in the heavenly temple. Ah! I have many friends there—more than I have on earth. I shall soon meet Pawson, Reece, Entwistle, Newton, and a host of others. ‘Haste, happy day—the time I long to see!’ ”

On Monday and Tuesday, he appeared somewhat revived—he rose early, and walked about now and then—and though no hopes of his recovery were entertained, it seemed likely that he might live a week or two longer. His soul was rejoicing in God—he frequently read some of the beautiful chapters in St. John’s Gospel, and often proposed prayer—saying, sometimes, at the conclusion of some devotional exercise—“That does me good—it brings me nearer my Saviour—it opens heaven to me.” On these days, a number of friends saw him—and many expressed themselves as having received no little encouragement, confirmation, and blessing, in witnessing the holy confidence, cheerfulness, and joy, he exhibited in prospect of death.

On Wednesday, the 20th, as duty seemed to require the sacrifice, his son left him, hoping to find him still alive on his return in a few days. When they parted, Mr. B. said—“Whatever may happen, do not be uncomfortable about me; I have not believed in a cunningly devised fable—but in a glorious

and saving gospel. We shall meet in heaven, if not again on earth. Christ's blood is my trust, and Christ's love is my comfort! Give my love and best wishes to your dear children, and tell them how much I shall be disappointed if I don't see them both at the right hand of God. The Lord bless you, my son! and cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace! Good bye!"

From that hour he gradually sank, but continued calm and happy, often saying,—“Why do his chariot wheels delay? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Oh! how I long to be gone, and to see my Redeemer, and those who have gone before!” The following day he remained in the same blessed state, joyfully looking for the coming of his Lord. On the arrival of the “Watchman” newspaper, he desired the record of deaths to be read. Among those just departed, there were several he had known and loved. He exclaimed—“And have they reached home before me? I almost wish I had gone two or three days ago with them—we should have been a happy company—and should have entered the everlasting gates together! Well, it will soon be over! God's will be done!”

On Friday, February 22nd, he read the letters which arrived by the morning post—and found several of them comforting to his soul. He expressed his thanks to his faithful servant Eliza, to her assistant in the house, and to Mrs. B——, who had so kindly attended him during his affliction, and prayed God to reward them, and direct their future course. He

refused to take some stimulant offered him, saying,—
“I am going into the presence of Christ, and I want none of that.” He now evidently changed for death, and often cried out,—“I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.” Soon after ten o’clock that morning, his friend, the Rev. W. Burt, who had come from Macclesfield to visit him, arrived; and the closing scene is thus described by that gentleman. He writes, “Mr. Beech was delighted at my appearance, and said cordially—‘I am glad you are here.’ On speaking to him of his spiritual state, he replied, ‘I have no change to make, all is right: the doctrines I have preached to others, are now my peace and comfort: I am going to glory. Glory be to God!’ He told me he wished to be buried among his own people, in our burial ground in Cheadle. After a while, he asked me to pray, prior to which I read the twenty-third Psalm, and part of the fourteenth chapter of St. John. He responded to every sentence. Afterwards, he talked sweetly for some time—often repeating part of a passage I had quoted, and saying, ‘I have redemption through his blood! redemption through his blood! Glory be to God!’ Then with great energy he exclaimed, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has cleansed me from all sin!—and almost immediately closed his eyes—breathed shorter and shorter—and while we fell on our knees, and commended him to God, without a sigh or groan, his happy spirit passed away to the realms of eternal bliss.”

He finished his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus, on February 22nd, 1856, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

We have little more to add. The late Rev. Hugh Beech has been represented as he was—devoted to Christ—fervent in spirit, and abundant in labours. Faults he doubtless had—for he was human. In his younger days, he was occasionally hasty in feeling and in word—sometimes a little impatient under the lesser trials of life—and now and then cheerful and humorous to a degree some would hardly suppose perfectly becoming. But he was a true Christian in spite of some traces of human infirmity—and a faithful, laborious, and successful preacher of the gospel. He fought the good fight, and he won the victory.

Reader ! art thou not disposed to say—

“ Oh ! may I triumph so,
When all my warfare’s past !”

We may remark, by way of appendix, that the tidings of Mr. Beech’s illness brought many letters of sympathy from his friends ; and the event of his death elicited numerous testimonies of the estimation in which he was held by those who knew him well. The insertion of a few sentences from some of these communications will form an appropriate conclusion to this biography ; and will show, that we have not been guilty of delineating the character of the deceased in flattering colours.

One of the most eminent men in the Wesleyan Ministry has thus written to his son :—“ Your dear and honoured father is now peacefully removed to his heavenly rest—a rest for which he was so mercifully prepared. How pleasingly was he distinguished by simple Christian goodness, by faithful and patient attention to his ministerial duties, and by the very kindness of charity ! He was a happy Christian man and Christian minister. I knew and loved him long, and little thought how soon I should cease to visit him in his stations, and should have to number him among beloved friends departed. Let us remember those whom we have loved and lost, though lost but for a time, whose faith let us also follow, considering the end of their conversation.” Another says—“ For Mr. Beech, ever since our acquaintance commenced, I have entertained a cordial esteem. His kind and friendly disposition, his warm and cheerful liveliness of spirit, and his fervour and diligence in the work of his Master, will not soon be erased from my mind. In every circuit in which he laboured, he endeared himself to many, very many friends.”

A gentleman in Liverpool, who has long been a member of the Church of England, but was warmly attached to Mr. Beech, and who manifested his affection by numerous generous attentions, thus expresses himself :—“ Our loss is his eternal gain. Painful as the interview would have been to me, I very much regret not having seen him in his affliction. I have known him for very many years, but only to respect

and love him. I shall ever revere his memory, and sincerely pray our last end may be like his."

Finally, the last March Quarterly Meeting of the Cheadle circuit unanimously passed the following resolution:—"That this meeting offers its sincere condolence to the Rev. J. H. Beech, on the loss he has sustained in the removal by death of his late much respected and honoured father, the Rev. Hugh Beech: and while it would bow with humble resignation to the Almighty disposer of events, to whom it alike appertains to kindle and to quench the lights of the sanctuary; it would gratefully record the high sense it entertains of the conduct of the late beloved pastor of this circuit as a Christian gentleman; of the superior qualifications he possessed for the ministerial office; and of the zeal, diligence, and success with which he discharged its sacred duties."

